

LIVING BY FAITH



BEGINNING YOUR WALK
AS A NEW BELIEVER

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The following sample is from the print version of Living by Faith.

Day 6: Disappointment

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Just about everyone has had some form of disappointment in their life. We may hope for something and then discover that it is not in God's plan for us and feel discouragement. Perhaps some aspect of your life has changed and you find yourself saddened. The job you wanted may not have come through or the home you wanted to purchase was beyond your financial means. Some couples pray for children but find that they are unable to conceive.

Regardless of the cause of the disappointment, God knows what is best for us. He has a purpose for not allowing what we thought we needed. Sometimes it is because there is something that is better for us. If we wait upon the Lord, continuing to keep our focus on Christ, we often later discover the reason why he allowed the disappointment to come.

Many Christians will tell you about some point in time when they were disappointed only to discover the wonderful blessing God had already planned for them or the protection that God gave them as a result. There are some things we will not know the reasons for until we get to heaven. But God always does what is best for us. He tells us so in this beautiful verse in Romans.

God says that 'all things work together for good to them that love God'. That means that even our disappointments work toward something that is good for us. Perhaps God is teaching you how to come to Him when you feel disappointment or discouragement. He may just be waiting for you to ask Him to show you what you need to do in your life from this point forward.

If you are struggling with a disappointment, go to God in prayer and ask Him to help you. He has sent us a Comforter to help us through these difficult times. Remember that He already has a plan for you and has worked everything out to your good. Take joy in knowing that God is in control.

Day 7: Temptation

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

Throughout your life you will be faced with temptations to sin. We are born with a sinful nature from the fall of Adam. Temptations do not come from God. They are brought into our life by Satan, the flesh (old sinful nature), and the world who would like nothing more than to see a Christian be disobedient.

God understands that we will be tempted and provides us a means of escape. He will not allow the devil to put any more temptation on us than we can handle. The Spirit within us can help us to resist the temptation to prevent us from falling into sin. We need to use caution in what we allow in our lives that could be a source of temptation.

It is important for us to be on guard in our lives for our own protection. Sin is disobedience and God hates sin. We have a choice of whether to take the means of escape or to allow the sin to enter into our life.

When you find that you are tempted by something immediately consider your means escaping the temptation. If it is something you are viewing on television, you can turn the television off. If you have a problem with gambling, don't go to places that have slot machines or video poker. For those that are tempted by alcohol, do not spend time in a bar. Everyone knows what their weaknesses are and should take measures to protect themselves before temptation comes.

We need to remain accountable to God for our actions. There is no secret sin. He is always with you and knows if you commit a sin. Spend time in God's Word and in prayer with the Lord to help you build a firm foundation. A good spiritual foundation can give you the tools to keep you from temptation and sin.

Is there a sin that seems to have a strong hold in your life? Think about the ways in which you could make changes to reduce the possibility of being tempted by that sin. Go to God in prayer today asking forgiveness for any sin you have committed while asking him to help you to keep you from all temptation and sin.

Day 8: Prayer

Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Matthew 21: 21-22

Never underestimate the power of prayer! There is nothing that is impossible to God. Our Lord can heal the sick and work situations out in our life that seem overwhelming to us. In fact, He already knows what you are going to pray for even before you pray. He's just waiting to hear from you.

When we have strong faith that God will answer our prayers and go to Him with certainty, if that prayer is within His will it will be answered. We will not have prayers answered that oppose God's commandments to us. It is important that we go to Him with the right motive. Earnestly seek His help or guidance with a willingness to accept whatever the Lord has planned for you. He knows our future and what will happen under all circumstances.

There was a woman that was sick from a disease in her blood. She had such a strong faith in Christ that she knew that if she merely touched His clothes she would be healed. Because of her strong faith when she reached out and touched Jesus' clothes, virtue went out of Him and she was healed (Matthew 9:20-22).

God takes notice of our petitions if we go to Him with faith. It is humbling when the Lord answers a prayer for us. We are reminded of how much we need Him, the strength we have through Him, and the love He has for us.

There will be times when our prayers are answered through God's silence. If a prayer appears to go unanswered it could be there is something else even better planned for you or that God is protecting you from something. The Lord knows what is good for us and what is not but He always works in our lives for our good (Romans 8:28).

Cast all doubt and fear aside going to the Father with your petitions today. Christ is our intercessor with the Father. Let your faith in Him guide you throughout the day and into your prayer life. Pray today for healing, direction in your job, guidance in your finances, and salvation for your enemies or loved ones.

Day 9: Gratitude

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Colossians 3:17

Every day is the right day for giving thanks and praise to God. There is so much to be thankful for. Many things we often take for granted. We are commanded that everything we do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus. We are to do our very best because we love God and want to please Him. When we do our best joyfully, regardless of the task, with praise unto God others can see Christ through us. It becomes a living testimony of our faith in Him.

Whether you are at work, home, school or serving in the church this applies to you. Every task you complete you have done so with help from the Lord. He has granted you the ability to walk, to stand, to talk, to use your hands, to see or hear, or to think clearly. There are many people who are not fortunate enough to have the use of their eyes to even read the Bible or the use of their hands to hold a printed book.

God's love and care for us is so great that 'even the very hairs of your head are all numbered' (Luke 12:7). There is no aspect of our life that He does not have control over. Every blessing is from Him and every trial has been allowed to serve a purpose for our good.

In our fast-paced world it is easy to forget all that God has done for us. People around the world complain about their jobs, longing for vacations, or change. College kids bemoan tests at exam time. Marriages suffer through stress. We need to keep our eyes focused on Christ and all the good things that God has given us. Be thankful for the job and the help to make it through the stress. Be thankful for the ability to go to college as many cannot afford to attend. Be thankful for your spouse because they are walking through the valleys and mountains of life alongside you.

Think about this past week. Have you done your best for the Lord? What has the Lord done for you this week? Did He help you through a task? Did He provide for you or your family? What blessings have you received this week? Go to the Father and thank Him today for the wonderful things He has done for you or simply for providing you with another day.

Day 10: Courage

Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Deuteronomy 31:6

When sin entered into the life of man so did doubt and fear. God knew that there would be many who might struggle with this in their lives so he told us to “be strong and of a good courage” more than once in His Word. Whether you are a soldier on the battlefield or the silent prayer warrior praying for a loved one who is sick, you have nothing to fear if you are a child of God.

At the time that you received Christ as your Saviour you became His property. There is nothing that can happen to you that God does not allow for some purpose. He will never allow more in your life than you can handle.

Let your faith in Christ give you the strength and courage to get through the difficult times, to help you to turn away from sin, or to be bold enough to tell others about Jesus. Never forget that God is with you every step of the way. You are never alone because He lives inside you. The Lord may have to carry you through some difficulties but He will never fail you nor forsake you.

Jesus and his disciples were travelling by ship when the winds rose into a big storm tossing the ship about. The disciples became afraid while Jesus was sleeping. They woke Him to alert Him of the storm. The Lord was in control and the ship would not be lost but the men had become frightened. Jesus rebuked the winds and sea stopping the storm. He asked them why they were so fearful and if they had no faith (Mark 4:35-41).

There may be times in your life when you feel alone and scared. Perhaps you are the only Christian among thousands of lost people or you may have lost your way on a hike in the woods. Has a circumstance in your life made you feel weak in your faith? Are you facing a medical issue that seems daunting? Is an overwhelming trial leaving you with doubt? Have you lost your job and fear the current economy? Are you a soldier fighting on foreign soil? What do you need strength and courage to face today?

If you have accepted Christ as your Saviour, God is with you right now. Give that fear over to Him and let the Lord lead. God is mightier than any man or circumstances in which we find ourselves. Be strong and of good courage because the Lord has told us that He will never fail you or forsake you!

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