



THE REFINERY **DEVOTIONAL**



Start your day with Christ's consciousness
and be refined unto all of God's goodness

AUGUST, 2017

www.therefinerychurch.net

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Blessings.

DAY 1

TOPIC: YES AND NO!

TEXT: James 5:12

Written by: ALADE OLUWASEGUN

“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.”

We live in a world where there is little or no regard for words. This is more apparent in our political system where persons who are to be elected as political leaders make promises in their manifestos and end up not fulfilling them. It is common everywhere to see people treat their own words with contempt by saying something and doing otherwise.

Apostle James instructs the saints in our text to maintain integrity by staying true with their words. “Let your yes be yes and no, no.” In other words, we must learn to keep to our words as this shows integrity. The word of God points us to the truth that the habit or mannerism of not being firm with one’s words is not of God.

James goes further to say that the integrity of words must be kept in order not to fall into condemnation. The word rendered as ‘condemnation’ here is the word ‘*hupokrisis*’ in the original Greek manuscript; it means "acting under a feigned part or acting in hypocrisy." In other words, it means falling short of one’s words.

As believers, we must hold our words in high esteem. We must be conscious of not making feigned words or acting contrary to what we say.

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DAY 2

TOPIC: REJOICE ALWAYS!

TEXT: Philippians 4:4

Written by: MAY AYINTETE

“Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice”

The instruction to rejoice is replete in the bible. To rejoice is to jump/leap/dance/spring for joy. The believer is to rejoice in the Lord “ALWAYS”. The instruction isn’t to rejoice sometimes or rejoice when one hits his first million or even when one bags a Ph.D. Not that it’s bad to be happy when we’re doing well in our various life endeavours. But we need to understand that what Apostle Paul commands here is not just having a cheerful disposition because of some money in our pockets but a deliberate act of obedience to the written word.

Some people ask why they have to rejoice when nothing significant has happened to them. Beloved, in the gospels, Jesus told his disciples to rejoice not because of the miracles they did but because their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20-21). That’s to show us that the entirety of the believer’s rejoicing is based on Christ’s finished work.

We rejoice in the Lord because joy is resident in our recreated spirits. The Spirit of God that lives in us is that of righteousness, peace and joy. We rejoice in the Lord because his life in us. We rejoice in the Lord because nothing can and will separate us from God’s love. We rejoice in the Lord always because our hope is not based on our circumstances or on the absence of trials but rather on our God who is faithful to do as he has promised. We rejoice in the Lord because his plan of salvation has been fulfilled and implemented in Christ Jesus.

Beloved, rejoicing in the Lord is a matter of obedience and not that of temperament. You have the resident ability of the Holy Ghost within you to do; so REJOICE EVERYDAY!

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DAY 3

TOPIC: ESTABLISHED IN THE TRUTH

TEXT: Philippians 3:1

Written by: ALOBA TOWOJU

"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed [is] not grievous, but for you [it is] safe."

In the text above, Apostle Paul brings to the fore a concept that is found in several places in the bible. He suggests that what he was writing to the Philippians were either the things he had earlier written to them or personally taught them. It is clear that they were already acquainted with the things he was saying in his epistle; nonetheless, he went ahead to still write the same things to them and considered such as a safe thing to do.

Obviously, there must be a great advantage in learning the things that one has known over and over again. We must never get tired of listening again and again to the biblical teachings, admonitions and instructions that we have known in times past. This will help us to be more firmly rooted and stable in the Lord. That is, we will not be easily drifted away or deceived by false teachings that may be flying around. In fact, this was the reason why Paul made such statement in the context of his epistle Philippians, as he went on immediately to warn them against certain people; the concision.

Also, the Galatians were easily deceived from the grace of God (Galatians 1:6) because they stopped listening to the things that they had learnt and started listening to new teachings. It is not mere religion to read the same books of the bible repeatedly, listen to wholesome messages and instructions over and over again. According to Paul, it is a safe practice for a believer to do. Every believer must never get tired of hearing again and again the seemingly simplest truths of the bible. You also must never get tired of the same truths you have known!

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DAY 4

TOPIC: IN EVERYTHING

TEXT: Philippians 4:6

Written by: MAY AYINTETE

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God”.

To be careful for nothing is not to be anxious or worried about the things of this present life. It does not mean that we shouldn't care to provide for our families, work hard and even care for our bodies; rather we are to have such confidence in God as to free our minds from anxiety to total dependence on Him to supply our needs.

The phrase “in everything” refers to the supply of our wants, the wants of our families etc. Nothing should be too small or too big for us to take to the Lord in prayers and supplication. And when the Lord meets our needs, we are to be thankful as well.

It is not as though God needs to be informed of our necessities or our every need. He already knows about them. He requires that we express them to Him, as it shows that we are assured that our sufficiency is of Him.

Beloved, if a thing is big enough to make you worried or gets you worked up, it is big enough for you to talk to God about it, and when you do, do it with unreserved confidence.

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Further Study: 1 John 4:13-14

DAY 5

GET BACK ON YOUR FEET

TEXT: 1 Samuel 30:6

Written by: OLUMIDE ADEDOTUN

"And David was greatly distressed; for the People spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord."

The passage from which the verse above was culled unveils to us how possible it is to emerge victorious over unpleasant situations that may befall a man. King David and his men had their home invaded while they were away; their sons, daughters and wives had been taken captive by the enemies' camp; and their city had been burnt and destroyed. We wouldn't be wrong to say that had lost everything. However, David demonstrated leadership, though he himself was also distressed. He encouraged himself in the Lord! This is crucial for every leader and all believers in Christ to learn from; whenever we face challenges such as this; we should not go about complaining neither should we give in to weariness, sadness, and regrets. We should rather find encouragement (strength) in the Lord.

David must have brought himself to the consciousness of God's faithfulness regardless of his present situation. He must have reminded himself that God never disappoints. He enquired of the Lord on what to do because he believed in God's ability to restore unto him all that he had lost.

Beloved, you might be faced with situations beyond your control; it may be about your family or your job; you might even be uncertain about what the future holds for you; but gather up courage! Be encouraged in the Lord; be assured that he never disappoints. Do not go about in self-pity or regret neither should you profess hopelessness to your situation, rather be encouraged in the unchangeability of God's faithfulness. Pray; speak to God about it, for He is forever faithful. The aftermath of David's enquiry of God was that he recovered all that he had lost, having gathered confidence in God to fight back. We should learn from this; don't just stay back folding our arms. Get back on your feet! Write the application, reach out to that family, and expect that things would change. Why? It is because we have a Father that is the forever faithful.

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DAY 6

TOPIC: RESIST THE DEVIL!

TEXT: James 4:7

Written by: ADEBAYO KOLAWOLE SAMUEL

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

The text above is clear. We have seen a script clearly written in the word. And we have seen our roles in the script. We are to act as the "almighty ones" where the devil is involved. He knows his role so well. He knows the role to play when we play ours. To resist is our role to play, to flee is his to act.

The powerful one is the one who exhibits resistance. The powerless one, the vanquished one, is the one who flees. To flee is not to walk away; it is to scurry away. If it said the devil walks away any time we resist him, one might be wont to think that he yet has some power, that he is able to resist our resistance. But not so! The word "flee" by analogy in its original Greek usage means "to vanish". Thus when we, the "almighty" ones, roar with strength from within us, the devil vanishes. He disappears. Hey man in Christ; the devil is afraid of you!

You (as every believer is) are the victor, the one with power and authority. Speak out; shout; use weapons from the arsenal that your lips are. Command, withstand, and oppose the devil; act that godly role which the Lord has given us. Resist the devil today, and watch him disappear!

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DAY 7

TOPIC: THE LETTER KILLS

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 3:6

Written by: ALOBA TOWOJU

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

It is not uncommon to see people try to use the text above as ground to talk low of a good bible study culture. Such people assume that the words in the bible are mere letters and it will take the influence of the Holy Spirit to convert such letters to life. Such funny assumption is an underlying belief in the minds of very many believers today. Little do they know that the written word was God-breathed (i.e inspired by God).

In the context of the Corinthian epistle, what Paul regarded as "the letter" was the Law of Moses. This is clear as he later referred to the letter as "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones". Clearly, the written word is neither written nor engraven in stones; hence the letter could not have been the written word.

You see, Paul regarded the Law of Moses as the ministration of death! That is, the Law of Moses does not give life. If this was the only reference to such notion, one would have thought that Paul was mistaken to have referred to the Law of Moses with such "strongly negative" phrase. He also referred to the Law as a tool that gives strength to sin (1 Corinthians 15:56). Moreover, he called it the "Law of sin and death" in another epistle (Romans 8:2).

The letter obviously kills! All that the Law of Moses works in men is sin and consequently death. Therefore, quit trying to use the Law in accessing the Spirit today. If you are already born again, you are of the Spirit. The Law is not meant for you; its work is to kill!

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DAY 8

TOPIC: WE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM!

TEXT: Colossians 2:10

Written by: OLUMIDE ADEDOTUN

“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

The word "complete" is the word "pleroo" in Greek, and it means to be full. Thus, the believer is full in Christ; this means he lacks nothing in Him. The entire body of Christ must be aware or rather full of conviction of this reality; that we are not lacking anything in Christ Jesus.

Certain messages in the body of Christ have made many believers feel inadequate about their realities in Christ Jesus; we find believers who are not sure of their salvation and a lot more who are unsure if they can receive or demonstrate the things of the Spirit. Some are unsure about their citizenship in Christ because they have been made to think they are unworthy, rejected, and lacking certain realities in Christ Jesus.

The truth, however, is opposite to what many have been made to agree to. The truth is that we are full; lacking nothing in Christ Jesus. Our text-verse is quite emphatic. It communicates this to us in a very definite language: we are complete in Him. There is no time we are unsaved; there is never a time when we lack/lose or we will lack/lose salvation; for we are saved eternally in Him. There is never a time when we will lack the ability to manifest spiritual gifts; for we have received the fullness of it. We must never be unsure about who we are in Christ, because we have received of His fullness, and we are complete in Him.

Beloved, we are complete in Him! Meditate on this always, and rejoice evermore over the same. We have received the fullness of Jesus Christ.

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DAY 9

TOPIC: SING WITH THE SPIRIT

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 14:15

Written by: ALADE OLUWASEGUN

‘What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.’

It is worthy of note that the whole chapter of our scripture text is helpful to clear all obscurity on the subject of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and its usage. After expounding the benefits of tongues and its interpretation in the previous verses, the Apostle Paul then says ‘I will pray with the Spirit...and sing with the Spirit’.

The word ‘will’ denotes a wish or desire to do something. This means that He made up his mind to pray and also sing with the spirit. We should also note that the writer used the words ‘pray and sing’ in the same context. Hence, the same way the believer prays with the spirit (i.e. praying tongues) is the same way he can add melody to the words he utters by the Spirit to make them songs. Singing with the Spirit does not require some other special ability. It is by the Spirit.

Beloved, you have the utterance to pray and sing with the spirit. And, as you are being edified by praying in tongues, you are also edified when you sing in tongues. Today, take out time to fill your heart with melody and sing a new song by the Spirit. You have utterance.

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DAY 10

TOPIC: WALK IN THE LIGHT!

TEXT: Ephesians 5:8

Written by: ADEBAYO KOLAWOLE SAMUEL

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:”

We must pay attention to the tenses used in the New Testament writings when we read them. We mustn't use a present tense or a present continuous tense where a past tense was used; doing this will lead us into saying what the Bible didn't say. By employing the role of tenses in our explanation of the verse above, we find that the believer isn't darkness. He is not in the dark. He was once a child of darkness, but not anymore. He was translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light at salvation (1Pet. 2:9, Col. 1:13). Hence, it would be greatly wrong of anyone to label the believer as "darkness".

Paul was trying to communicate a responsibility we have as believers in this verse, but he first tells us who we are in Christ. We become responsible with or obedient to instructions in the epistles to the degree that we are aware about our identity in Christ. Paul, as a master communicator of apostolic instructions, does it the right way, using the language of the New Testament: "you are light in the Lord: walk as children of light ". The New Testament language tells you who you are, so that you can act accordingly. This is the right way to instruct or correct a believer.

Beloved, we are light in the Lord; let us walk as children of light; to walk in the light means that we are acting in conformity with our identity. It means we have acknowledged every good thing in us in Christ Jesus, and we are walking in the light of same. We are light in the Lord; let us walk as children of light!

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DAY 11

TOPIC: OUR PRESENT STATE

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 6:11

Written by: ALADE OLUWASEGUN

‘And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.’

For better comprehension of our text, it is expedient to read the two verses before it;

“9 -Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind

10 -Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

The verses above have been misunderstood and misinterpreted to mean that the believer in Christ may not inherit the kingdom of God due to character flaws. However, by reading the verses diligently, we see that the true intent of Apostle Paul is to distinguish the believer from the unbeliever.

The word ‘unrighteous’ in verse 9 refers to the unbeliever; the person who has not received the gift of God’s salvation. This person is further characterized as fornicator, idolater, adulterer etc. However, in verse 11, which is our text for today’s devotional, the Apostle Paul distinguished his audience (believers) from the unrighteous (unbelievers) by saying that ‘and such were some of you’. This means that the believer is no longer the unrighteous one.

The believer is washed, sanctified and justified by the Spirit of God; this is our present state as believers in Christ. Never should we misconstrue the present state of the believer. We are new creatures. We are in the kingdom of God!

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DAY 12

TOPIC: SELF-CONTROL

TEXT: Galatians 5:22-23

Written by: ALOBA TOWOJU

"22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The fruit of the spirit as seen in the above text is best explained as the characteristics of the New Creation. Just as Biology teaches that all living organisms have eight characteristics which include movement, respiration, reproduction, etc. All new creatures have nine characteristics peculiar to them. These characteristics are not subject to age or level of growth. Furthermore, to have eight out of these nine characteristics is to say that such is not a new creature. Little wonder the bible expressly declared that the believer is complete in Christ, who is the head of all principalities and powers.

Temperance, as rendered by the King James Version, is another word for self-control, which is a fruit of the Spirit. Self-control is the intrinsic ability in the believer to tame his desires and passions, particularly his sensual appetites. A man once explained self-control as a virtue present in every believer which makes him to deny an immediate pleasure for a more glorious cause. Such desires which are denied are not necessarily sinful (although they may be sinful). However, they are always things that give pleasure to the body.

As a believer in Christ, there is such great and mighty ability of God in you that can tame your flesh of its desires such as sexual pleasures, food, anger, sleep, etc. You have such strength which enables you to flee from premarital sex, to fast and pray and so on. Even though your body seeks otherwise at such times, you see more of self-control manifesting in your life when you fix your mind on this reality till all our members are subject to the same truth. Self-control is yours; let it flow through you.

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DAY 13

TOPIC: GOD LOVES YOU

TEXT: 1 John 4:10

Written by: MAY AYINTETE

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Many times, believers have a hard time understanding the love of God because more often than not, they've been told that God's love is dependent upon what they do. They have been told that they have to impress God to be on His merit list.

However, God's love for us is unfailing and never-changing. It is constant throughout the ages. It is not dependent on what we do, what we are going to do, or what we have done. God isn't mad at you. His love was shown to us by what He did for us in Christ.

When we focus on our failures and shortcomings, we lose sight of how much God loves us, and that can make us feel miserable. All God wants for us is that we understand His love for us. He wants us to know that there's nothing we do that can separate us from Him. We are one with God because of His Spirit that lives in us.

As you go about your day, get your focus off yourself and place it on the Lord. Be conscious of the truth that His love for you is everlasting; forever; never-ending, and never-ceasing. Hallelujah!

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Further Study: Romans 8:38-39

DAY 14

TOPIC: BE COMMITTED IN SERVICE

TEXT: Romans 12:6-8

Written by: OLUMIDE ADEDOTUN

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy, according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness.”

The Apostle Paul, in the above verses, charges the church not just to serve but be consistent and diligent in service. It is very crucial for believers to know that they must be committed to doing something among the saints; this means idleness is not an option for the believer. We are all to render service in the body of Christ.

Having an understanding of this should make all believers eager for service in the body of Christ. It is therefore a necessity for every believer to be a part of a local church and be of service in the local church where he or she belongs. We are not to be idle or demonstrate lack of commitment to our local church; instead we should show commitment. Service is, but not limited to, giving when you should give, edifying the saints, exhorting the brethren, sweeping the church, hospitality towards other saints etc.

Finally, Apostle Paul admonishes that we remain steadfast in service, steady, and unwavering. Thus, if you have been serving, keep at it; don't hold back; stay put at what service you render in your local church; keep at giving; do not pull back from the work of ministry! We have been empowered with gifts; we exercise them, we keep up the work, we don't hold back!

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DAY 15

TOPIC: WE BOAST IN THE LORD

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 1:30-31

Written by: ADEBAYO KOLAWOLE SAMUEL

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

We are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. This statement reflects our identity in Christ Jesus. It shows our union with him. We are in Him, and He is our righteousness... We are His, as He is ours.

Paul lets us know that this truth has an effect it causes in us; it is to the end that we may glory in the Lord. The word "glory" in the original Greek manuscript is the word "kauchaomai". It means "to vaunt, glory, joy, rejoice". Therefore, to glory in the Lord is to boast and rejoice in the Lord. In Christ Jesus, we have a reason to brag. Christ is the bragging rights of the believer. Outside the finished works of Christ, the believer loses his bragging rights. His works cannot cause him to boast in the Lord; only Christ's works can.

We, of God, are in Christ Jesus; our righteousness, our wisdom, our sanctification, our redemption, our salvation. We boast in Him! We rejoice exceedingly in Him, for He is forever ours, and we are forever His!

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DAY 16

TOPIC: IF (WHEN) THE BELIEVER SINS

TEXT: 1 John 2:1-2

Written by: ALADE OLUWASEGUN

'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'

Apostle John expressed his desire through his epistle that the believer should not sin. However, if anyone sins, the solution is to acknowledge Jesus' position as the advocate and propitiation for sins.

When the believer sins, it is inappropriate to condemn such a person by saying he is eternally damned or that God is counting the sins against him. To do this is to disregard Jesus' role and treat his eternal sacrifice for sins with contempt.

That Our Lord Jesus is the advocate for sins does not in any way mean that right now He sits at the right hand of the Father begging Him to overlook sins. He is the advocate for sins by taking upon himself the judgement of sins. This he manifested when he was crucified on the cross, died, was buried and rose up into eternal glory. His ascension into heaven was to present himself as the perfect sacrifice for sins. Hence, He sits as the eternal propitiation for sins forever.

It is noteworthy that this sacrifice is not exclusive to believers only but also to unbelievers because God's love is for the world. While the unbeliever is to receive this gift of remission of sins, the believer is to constantly acknowledge what he has received the forgiveness of sins.

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DAY 17

TOPIC: NOTHING SHALL SEPARATE US

TEXT: Romans 8:38-39

Written by: ALOBA TOWOJU

"38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul, by the inspiration of God, penned down the reality of the Spirit which the believer has in the eighth chapter of the book of Romans. Having said a whole lot, he concludes the passage by asking a critical question which pertains to the man who has received the Spirit. He questioned if anything can separate the recipient of God's Spirit from the love of God. In the same text, he answered the question in a very profound way.

Let me pause at this point and say that very many times, we have read our thoughts into what Paul referred to as "the love of God" in this passage. The "love of God" as used here does not in any way mean our love for God. If Paul meant our love for God, his answer was definitely a lie. This is because persecution, peril, death and many other things can make a man stop loving God; man in himself is subject to change, he's not always the same. This passage is purely talking about the constancy and strength of God's love irrespective of physical variables and even man's variability.

Paul declared without any iota of doubt that nothing shall be able to separate the man who has received God's Spirit from the Father's love. Absolutely nothing! Not in this world or in that to come! He had earlier stated the reason for such assurance in the thirty-fourth verse: Jesus is already at the right hand of God. Our intercession is forever seated! He's not there for Himself but for us. Hence, we can rest in the Father's love. Hallelujah!!!

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DAY 18

TOPIC: GOD FREELY GIVES!

TEXT: Romans 8:32

Written by: MAY AYINTETE

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

There’s this statement that most people make that “God gives and God takes”. Even most Christian folks are guilty of it. You hear it especially when a person dies or at a funeral ceremony. Most people think such a statement honours God, but in reality, it gives an extremely wrong view of who our God is.

The text above lets us know that God, who did not spare Jesus but gave him up as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, will give us all things freely. In the first place, God didn’t ask anything in return for the remission of our sins. It is His will that we have all of Him without having to pay a dime. He gave us Jesus who came to give us life in abundance (John 10:10) and adding to it, he gave us his Spirit without measure.

Even when Jesus was here on earth, never for once was it recorded that he took anything from people who came to Him. Rather, He healed, delivered and met every need. He is the express image of the Father. As the Father is, so Jesus is.

Beloved, God wants you to know that He is the one who gives you all good things. And if he could give you JESUS, why wouldn’t he freely give you other things? God isn’t a businessman who does trade-by-barter when he wants to bless you materially; neither does he take back when HE gives. His character/disposition in giving is that He gives freely and liberally, without finding fault at all. This is our God!

AWESOME! GLORY TO GOD!

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DAY 19

TOPIC: HE NEVER GIVES UP ON ANYONE

TEXT: Luke 15:3-5

Written by: OLUMIDE ADEDOTUN

“And he spake unto them a parable unto them, saying, what a man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing.”

Jesus Christ gave the above parable to the Pharisees who challenged him about the intent of his friendship with sinners. In subsequent verses, we would see unveiled to us the intent of his fellowship with sinners; it is with the intention that they would repent (that is, change their minds, and believe in Him as the Saviour). The above verse unveils what is consistent about Jesus Christ; he never gives up on the sinners. This is unlike the messages some of us might have heard about Jesus Christ. We might have heard that he neglects us in our sins, that he afflicts us with certain difficulties when we sin in order to get us to repent or that he gives up on us, reclaims his salvation or leaves the unbeliever unsaved and doomed for eternity. However, these are nothing but lies.

We have now clearly seen, as revealed in Jesus himself, that he never gives up on anyone; he is rather consistent in bringing them unto repentance. He is not the one to afflict you with sickness when you sin; he is not the one to take back what he has given to us because of our wrongdoings; he never gives up on anyone; neither believers in Christ nor the sinner; he rather extends to all of us his offer for friendship— for the unbeliever, his love and willingness to have him repent and saved and for the believer, his desire that we enjoy the fellowship that we have with Him.

We are not abandoned by Christ; he remains faithful. Who told you are unworthy to be saved? Who notified you that you have lost the Holy Spirit because you sinned? Who told you that you are unqualified to be used of God? It is a lie! Jesus remains faithful; he never gives up on all of us— you are not unworthy to be saved. The Holy Spirit never left you, neither are you unqualified to be used of God. This is because Jesus never gives up on all of us.

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DAY 20

TOPIC: GODLY CORRECTION

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:16

Written by: ALOBA TOWOJU

"All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

One of the major themes taught and practiced in the bible is correction! This fact can be found on several pages of the bible, across both old and new testaments books. King Solomon mentioned quite a number of wholesome truths about correction. One of such is in Proverbs 3:12:

"For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth."

Without mincing words, he explains that one of the evidences that God loves a man is that He also corrects him. He further explains it in the light of "Father to son" relationship. Everyone who has received the Father's love is a son, and so must be ready to receive the Father's corrections as well. This is what the bible teaches.

Our text for today mentions the purpose of the scriptures, given by the inspiration of God. It is profitable for teaching, evidence, correction and instruction in righteousness. Hence, we can safely conclude that one of the reasons why the written word is given is for the sake of corrections. Many have the mind-set that God sometimes employs unpalatable experiences such as hunger, suffering, sickness, poverty etc. as tools to correct believers. Such notion is not just against scriptures; it is also defamatory against God. Such notion bears false witness against the personality of God. The only way that God uses in correcting us is through His word, whenever we read or hear his word in the mouth of other believers. This is obvious in the earthly ministry of Jesus who is the express image of God. The only way by which Jesus corrected people in his earthly ministry was through his words alone. Always be humble enough to receive God's correction, it's one of your privileges in Christ.

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DAY 21

TOPIC: GIVE THANKS

TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Written by: ALADE OLUWASEGUN

'In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.'

It is axiomatic that human needs are insatiable. Every day we wake up with one need or the other. We often get pressured and depressed with our earthly needs that we forget to acknowledge, and thereby neglect the eternal provisions made for us by God in Christ Jesus. The bible is filled with the promises of God for us. For instance, in times of trouble, we are to be of good cheer because He has overcome the world for us; in times of want, we are to cast our cares on him for he cares for us affectionately; when we feel that he is far from us, he says he will never leave us nor forsake us... These assured promises should cause us to rejoice and be eternally grateful to God.

We make ourselves conscious of the presence of God in us when we give thanks. We see him more clearly at the center of all our life issues when we worship and give thanks. Even when making supplications and requests in prayers, the Apostle Paul instructed that it must be done with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6). In other words, the believer must inculcate the habit of giving thanks.

Beloved, give thanks in everything. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

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DAY 22

TOPIC: WE ARE NO LONGER DEAD IN SINS!

TEXT: Ephesians 2:1

Written by: OLUMIDE ADEDOTUN

“And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

Often times, in understanding who the man in Christ is, we have to pay attention to how tenses are used in the declaration of his reality. Look at the words employed by Apostle Paul again; the word “**were**” is a past tense. Hence, it is not a present reality but a past one. The Apostle Paul was saying here that the believer used to be dead in sins, but not anymore. The words “dead in trespasses and sins” infers the nature of sin rather than an action. The Apostle Paul was not in any way referring to some morally faultless believers; he couldn’t have been. He was referring to the nature believers have and not what they do. The Apostle thus affirmatively says that the nature of believers is without sin; that means our nature is free of sins. We received the nature completely free from sin; thus, we are blameless, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. It is for this reason we are no longer dead; we are now alive without sins in Christ.

This is not to say that what a believer does is not important because unnecessary questions such as “are we now saying that what a believer does is of no significance?” may be asked. What a believer does is of great significance; however, the reality of the believer is not in the thing he does or not, but in who he is: he is who he is because of the nature he bears.

Now, answering the question; in verses 2 and 3 of Ephesians 2, Paul points out clearly that men respond to the nature they bear. This is the reason why we once walked according to the course of the world, lust of the flesh, because we had the nature of the children of disobedience. This subsequently means that believers having received the nature without sin can thus yield to that nature and exercise themselves unto good works. We can now walk in accordance to the nature that we have received.

Believers are no longer dead in sins; we are alive in Christ! We can walk in agreement with our new nature; this nature is of God, and we can exercise it unto an expression of all that is of God.

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DAY 23

TOPIC: THE PRACTICE OF SOUL WINNING

TEXT: Matthew 28:18-19

Written by: ALOBA TOWOJU

"19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen."

Upon the resurrection of Jesus, He gave an instruction to his disciples. This instruction is often referred to as the "Great Commission" today. He gave them this instruction having enabled them for the work. The instruction was for them to baptize and teach people in His name. These two things they were to do till the end of the world with the blessed assurance that He will be with them always.

Every man who has believed the same gospel which they received has also been saddled with this same responsibility by the power of God. Baptism here does not refer to water baptism. It makes zero sense to give people divine power just so they can immerse others in water. Jesus' baptism is baptism by the Spirit. To baptize here means to get people saved (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). To teach people is to disciple them by the words of Jesus. This is the responsibility of every believer. He's also supposed to do this with the consciousness of the ever-abiding presence of the Spirit within him, irrespective of wherever he may be in time.

Dear believer, I hope you are still faithful to this blessed instruction? It is your responsibility to preach the gospel to unbelievers and teach them after they must have been saved. You must never be found wanting in carrying out your responsibility. If you have grown weak in evangelism, this is a call for you to return to such practice. Initiate a conversation that will lead to the sharing of the gospel today and continue in this practice always

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DAY 24

TOPIC: DO NOT FRUSTRATE GOD'S GRACE!

TEXT: Galatians 2:21

Written by: ADEBAYO KOLAWOLE SAMUEL

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Paul, the Apostle, emphatically states what he does not do in the text above; "he doesn't frustrate the grace of God". Paul doesn't want us doing the opposite of this. He's writing to us, by revelation, that we don't frustrate the grace of God. What does it mean to frustrate the grace of God? It's important that we understand this wonderful phrase used by our beloved brother Paul. Many, not understanding what Paul was saying here, have gone on to infuse their own thoughts and opinions into Paul's statement, thus corrupting what Paul intended.

The word "frustrate" is the word "atheteō" in the original Greek manuscript; it means "to set aside, disesteem, neutralize or violate". Thus, to frustrate the grace of God is to disesteem the grace of God. The grace of God is in Christ Jesus (John 1:17). He is the grace of God. Therefore, to frustrate the grace of God is to set Christ aside. Paul, in his opening verses in the book of Galatians, lets us know the Galatians were doing this. They were trying to get righteous by their deeds. They were doing what Paul doesn't do.

Beloved, Paul, by the Spirit of Christ, writes to us not to frustrate the grace of God. Righteousness doesn't come by doing the law. It comes only by faith in what Christ did for us at salvation. Let us not treat Christ as one who died and didn't rise again. Let us not frustrate God's grace. We are righteous in Him. He did this for us. Let us therefore bask joyfully in His work! We do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain!

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DAY 25

TOPIC: YOU HAVE ALL OF GOD'S FULLNESS

TEXT: Colossians 2: 9-10

Written by: MAY AYINTETE

“For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power”.

The above text lets us know that all of God's fullness resides in Jesus Christ. That is to say, God's attributes are contained in him; for it pleased the Father to make it so (Col 1:19). At salvation, we received the Spirit of Christ. Hence, we now have the fullness of God also. Just as the fullness of God was given to Jesus without measure, so also it is for the believer.

To be full of God is to be full of everything that God is. We are to know this fully, and also walk in the light of the same, that we may experience this fullness that is within us. All of God's fullness resides in His eternal life that he gave to the believer. He gave us the right to become the sons of God. All of God's fullness resides in his righteousness which we have received by faith. All of God's fullness is what we received when we were made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Beloved, you are not in any way short of God's fullness. You have the entirety of God within you. His Spirit resides in you forever. You are his beloved. You can do what He can do. His authority has been given to you in Jesus' name. You can reconcile men back to God. You can heal the sick. You can raise the dead. You can do miracles! You are full of God! Hallelujah!

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DAY 26

PROOF OF SONSHIP

TEXT: Ephesians 1:13

Written by: OLUMIDE ADEDOTUN

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

The reality of the man in Christ is that he is sealed with the Holy Spirit, having believed. In the body of Christ today, it has become a norm that in order to be attested as a member of the body of Christ, certain level of moral uprightness or behavioural modifications must be seen to be expressed; while this is not entirely wrong considering that we are to exercise ourselves unto good works, it becomes very wrong to use that as a means of identification of who a believer is or not.

The salvation of the man who believes is spiritual. If it was not, then unbelievers who are morally pious are also born again; hence, there will be no need to preach the gospel to them. This, however, is not so. To be born again is to be born or conceived of the Spirit. Thus, every believer is born of God's Spirit. Sonship is not a function of the deeds of a man. Rather, it is a function of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is received at salvation.

In our text-verse, we find an affirmation of the reality of the believer. The Apostle Paul was very sure; he made it known with certainty that the believer was sealed with the Holy Spirit when he believed. The word "seal" means "to attest" or "to stamp". Hence, the Holy Spirit we have received, having believed, is an attestation that we are sons of God. He is the proof that we are God's, and that God is our Father. So beloved, you are God's son; you are His heir; you are one with the Father. It may not seem like it, and you may not feel it; but it is true! We have received the Spirit of sonship! It's not a feeling. It's the truth. The Spirit lives in us forever! Hallelujah! We are sons of God forevermore!

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DAY 27

TOPIC: STAND FAST IN YOUR LIBERTY

TEXT: Galatians 5:1

Written by: ALADE OLUWASEGUN

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage”

To stand fast means to be unmovable and to persevere. Interestingly, the church in Galatia had a strong instruction to persevere in freedom. The reason for this charge is so that they be not entangled or ensnared in the yoke of bondage. The phrase "yoke of bondage" in this context speaks of circumcision and the Law of Moses. This is made lucid by reading the pre-texts and post-texts (i.e. the verses before and after our text-verse).

Today's devotional puts us in remembrance that the believer in Christ is not obligated to fulfil the requirements of the Law. There is no man that can be justified by the Law. To desire to be under the law is to mean that all that Christ has accomplished by His death and resurrection is of no effect. (Gal 5:4).

Jesus Christ has obliterated all the ordinances that were written against us and contrary to us. He has set us free from the obligation of fulfilling the Law (Col 2:14). We are to stand fast in this liberty.

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DAY 28

TOPIC: MORE THAN CONQUERORS!

TEXT: Romans 8:37

Written by: ADEBAYO KOLAWOLE SAMUEL

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Paul rounds off the eighth chapter of the book of Romans with a very profound statement. He lets us know that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. The phrase "through him that loved us" refers to the death of Jesus. For God demonstrated his love toward the world in the death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:8). The death of Jesus is the love of God in motion. Thus, Paul was saying that through Jesus' death (and resurrection), we who have believed, are more than conquerors.

He lets us know that in tribulation, or distress, or sword, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or persecutions (which are all descriptive of moments and times) we are more than conquerors. This means that there's no time when we are less than conquerors. Let this sink into your mind and settle therein: you are more than a conqueror at all times. The phrase "more than conquerors" means "to vanquish beyond". It's the language of one who has conquered far greater than the natural mind can fathom. Our victory in Christ is not one that leaves us with reasons to doubt if we really conquered or not. It is an exceedingly great one!

We are more than conquerors! There's a roar within us! There's a shout of a King within us! There's no situation, great or small, that can shake us off our feet. We are men with the sight of God in our eyes, His thoughts and wisdom in our hearts and His power mighty in our hands, by His Spirit within us! Beloved, there is no devil, wherever it may be, that can stop us! We are the terrible ones; we are the ones to be feared! We are more than conquerors through him that loved us!

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DAY 29

TOPIC: PRAY FOR PASTORS

TEXT: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

Written by: MAY AYINTETE

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.”

In the epistles, Apostle Paul admonishes the saints to pray for him and other apostles, that the gospel be preached unhindered. He wanted them to pray so that wherever they went to, people would come to the knowledge of the truth of God’s word. He said just as the saints heard the word, believed and became saved, so also they (the saints) should pray that the gospel flourishes, takes over and finds an entrance in the hearts of men.

It is expedient that believers inculcate that same attitude of praying for pastors. They should pray that God creates avenues for them for the gospel to be preached to people in all spheres of life. They should pray that they preach the word as they ought, with boldness. There are some certain people who desire to pervert the gospel for their stomach’s sake; they deceive people with all kinds of lies and false doctrines, thus preventing people from hearing and receiving the gospel. Believers should endeavour to pray that pastors be delivered from such.

It is clear that one of the major reasons why we should pray for our pastors is strictly for doors to be opened for propagation of the gospel, so that people get to come to the light of God’s word. Brethren beloved, let us pray for our pastors, that they be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men who don’t have faith in the gospel of our Lord Jesus, that utterance be given them, that they may speak the word of God with all boldness, as they ought to. We will be doing a lot if we do this; we will be causing numerous doors to open for the prospering of the gospel in their mouths.

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DAY 30

TOPIC: COMMITMENT TO FRIENDSHIP

TEXT: Romans 16:3

Written by: OLUMIDE ADEDOTUN

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.”

There is something peculiar in all of Apostle Paul’s letters and that is his way of appreciation to the church. The Apostle Paul never ended any of his letters without greeting, telling his helpers of their shared identity in Christ and appreciating them for the things they had contributed in his ministry.

We should learn from Paul. We can draw out a conclusion on his consistent attitude, that beyond participating in all spiritual activities together, working in a unit, something also is very crucial and that is learning to appreciate others; co-labourers, friends, and families. Appreciating people is a way to say you recognize them and their sacrifices. This certainly goes far; it goes a long way to encourage the brethren, to lift up their spirits, to earn trust and respect and build up awesome friendships or teams.

Finally, Apostle Paul makes something obvious; we do not have to be physically present to make this a reality. When he was not physically present, he employed the use of letters. Location should not be a barrier to building friendships and to showing appreciation. So, it is not an excuse if they are far away; we can still reach out to them. This lesson from Apostle Paul should be put to practice; show great love to your pastor, appreciate your team-heads and members, tell them you appreciate their efforts, check out for those members who were absent in services, give a visit and give a call to those who rendered you help or you have long seen. By this, we demonstrate oneness, support and love to, and for, one another.

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DAY 31

TOPIC: BE UNMOVABLE!

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:58

Written by: ADEBAYO KOLAWOLE SAMUEL

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Contextual reading of the chapter from which the text above was quoted will let us know the premise for such a firm conclusion as this by the Apostle Paul. He had written in preceding verses about the certainty of our resurrection from the dead as believers. He writes to teach and exhort us about what is popularly referred to as "the rapture". He sounds to us in a very assuring manner that we shall all be changed (1 Cor. 15:51). This means that we shall all be raptured. Paul, by the Spirit of Christ, shows us clearly that not one believer will miss the rapture; hence his use of the phrase "we shall all" (including himself) also.

Therefore, having written this, he goes on to exhort us unto steadfastness. We are to be unmovable, always abounding in the work of Lord. The work of the Lord is everything that pertains to the ministry we have all received of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Pay attention also to the word "always"... Paul is telling us that our disposition at all times should be one inclined towards the prospering of the Lord's work.

Beloved, we are to labour fervently with the Lord. We are to be committed to the propagation of the gospel, with our time, energy, and all the resources at our disposal, knowing full well that our labour in the Lord is not in vain.

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