

Devotions – July 21-27, 2019

By Ray Berg

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Sunday, July 21, 2019

Prayer Changes Us

Text: Luke 9:29a

As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed...

This was Luke's report of Jesus as he made ready to ascend to meet his Father. He speaks of the glow and shine apparent on Jesus and his clothing.

Apostle Paul spoke of a different glow or light when he wrote to the Philippians. In Philippians 4:5 he indicated that our inner qualities are visible on our face, right there for everyone to see. "Let your gentleness be evident to all." Another time he wrote to Colossians to tell them they are God's chosen people – they are holy and dearly loved. They were told to "clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." We are being told to have a connection with Jesus- to love Him, be filled with those things so that we are overflowing to the point of it being obvious to others as they see us. As we pray, we change; others see Christ in us. His love is visible through us as we develop a close connection through prayer.

Let us Pray: *Dear Heavenly Father, we ask for help in developing that special connection with you. Help us to be kind enough, compassionate enough that it shows through in our face. Let us be an example of Christ's love. Amen*



Monday, July 22, 2019

God Receives Praise Through People

Text: Ephesians 1:14

...this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

I will guess that God's home is designed somewhat like we design our homes. When we design our abode, we put those things we like, what appeals to us, what we enjoy and what makes us feel good into our living space. Heaven is God's home and I believe it is designed to house Christians, those of us who love the Lord. Those of us whose goal is to emphasize His greatness

and all the wonderful things in our lives which happened because of God's love of us. Those of us who love God and praise God, allow others to learn about how thorough and widespread that love is. Through our exhortations and life, we live as Christians and we hopefully send praise for our loving father. A sort of Mutual Admirations Society. He loves us so much we can only love Him back. When we know, how can we not?

Let us Pray: *Dear Father, I pray that as we go about our daily life we become a spokesman for what is in our hearts. Let us become the forerunner of God's grace and love. Let us become a shining example of "God receiving Praise through People." Allow others to become aware of and in love with God through our verbal actions. Amen*



Tuesday, July 23, 2019

With Christ You Will Endure

Text: Deuteronomy 33:25

And your strength will equal your day.

In today's world some people are working so very hard every day and sometimes to achieve only a modest lifestyle. Parents of young children are certainly challenged by the full and hectic schedule of early rising and tight scheduling for everyone in the house. Sometimes it's a single-parent home, although even two-parent homes have challenges such as low income or high stress jobs, perhaps special needs children, or other extenuating circumstances can cause us to become weary. Let us remember that it is God who provides us with that job (difficult as it is). And God reminds us that He is Lord over all. We are not forgotten. We are not alone in our troubles. God knows and understands our burdens. He doesn't lay a heavier burden on us than we can bear. Do not become bitter or blaming of others but do become gracious and appreciative of what we do have. Ask God to help us find more down time and ways of enjoying the time we do have.

Let us Pray: *Father, help me to realize the goodness of my life and to appreciate all those minutes available to me. Teach me to be appreciative of my Lord, my family, my church family, my job, and any free time left. Amen*



Wednesday, July 24, 2019

Power of Prayer

Text: James 5:6

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Text: Matthew 5:44

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

We have heard this all our lives. Pray for your enemies. It seems that today our lives are so incredibly busy that we hardly know our neighbors name much less well enough to establish a hateful relationship. However, those relationships do exist and can make life miserable for us. Jesus through his disciples is telling us how to deal with such a situation. If we have someone who is purposefully and regularly persecuting you, who does and says things that cause you pain, then he is saying to use prayer as a weapon against it. This isn't to say just to mention it in passing one day. This means diligently asking God to change what is going on, to turn things around, to make a difference. Talk to God, many times a day about this. Earnestly, passionately, often. Prayer can make a difference.

Let us Pray: *Father, I need help! Please provide a way for this painful situation to change. Help me to see if there is something I can do to turn things around. Make me a person who is willing to pray persistently. Amen*



Thursday, July 25, 2019

People with God's Wisdom

Text: 1 Kings 3:28

He had wisdom from God

God came to Solomon in a dream. Solomon said that he was like a child - not knowing how to be king. Solomon understood that God had appreciated Solomon's father, King David, because David was faithful to God and righteous and upright in heart. Solomon understood that he had no experience being king; however, that there would be many situations in which great wisdom would be needed. It was a huge kingdom with numerous people. Solomon considered all this and wanted to be the king God wanted him to be. Therefore, God heard Solomon and told him to ask for whatever he needed to be king. Therefore, Solomon told God to give him a discerning heart to govern God's people and to distinguish between right and wrong. This answer pleased the Lord and He said since Solomon had asked for this and not for long life or wealth for himself or death of his enemies, "I will do what you have asked. There will never be anyone like you or ever will be."

Let us Pray: *Heavenly Father, we know that all things come from you! Give us your wisdom in these days of turbulence, in order to make sound judgments in large decisions and small ones. Amen*



Friday, July 26, 2019

Text: John 20:29

“Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

For me this is a difficult passage to explain. On the one hand it is so simple because all we need to do is believe. As children we do this all the time. Our loving parents tell us things and because they have been so trustworthy and RIGHT, then we believe. Yet when it comes to believing that Jesus was born of a virgin woman, was a man, then willingly died for us - in our stead, we sometimes have misgivings. Not only that but he then rose up from his burial place inside the tomb and shed his wrappings and walked away. The angel said so. Alive and victorious! He was seen and recognized several times. He was touched by some, observed eating food, was seen as he ascended upward to abide with his Father God, where he awaits our arrival. His Father God chose this excruciatingly painful way to pay for our sinful ways. His only Son, His beloved Son, His perfect Son. DIED FOR US! “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN AND YET HAVE BELIEVED. “

Let us Pray: *Our Father, we thank you for the gift of salvation. We pray for the simple faith of believing how your Son gave his life that we may have eternal life. Amen*



Saturday, July 27, 2019

The Lord Can Change Us

Text: Psalm 119:36

Turn my heart toward your statutes...

Because our nature is to turn away from those things which are commanded by God, we sometimes pray that He would somehow “cause” us to turn toward the things associated with God. Our sinful nature is so automatically more interested in things of a more human nature. Our everyday behavior lines up more with our own comfort, our own well-being and interests. Even counselors suggest that “Happiness is not getting what we want. Happiness is wanting what we have.” The Psalmist declares us to pray “turn my heart toward your statutes.” God’s love for us is beyond our imagination and He wants happiness for us. Because He knows how that can and will happen and has left a pattern, then we can ask Him to walk us through the acceptance of the path laid out for us.

Let us Pray: *Father, I pray that you will awaken me to your plan for me, stay beside me as I begin to follow the way of life you have that will lead to a life of great richness and happiness. Amen.*

