

AUGUST 2022

**IN
HIS
FOOTSTEPS**

**A DAILY DEVOTIONAL
FOR A CLOSER WALK
WITH GOD.**

**KINGDOM SUPPORT INITIATIVES(KSI)
PUBLICATION.**

In His Footstep
A Daily Devotional by Kingdom Support Initiatives (KSi)
August 2022

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August 1st

Resist the Devil!

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7 (KJV).

Bible Reading: Ephesians 6:10-18

To resist simply means to fight against somebody or something; to refuse to give in to something or to say no to something tempting. Resisting becomes easier when we realize the magnitude of the consequence of NOT resisting. For example, it is easier to resist the temptation to fornicate if you knew that the person you are about having sex with has a sexually transmitted disease. If you don't know the consequence, you might only think of the instant gratification. Similarly, believers ought to know that they have an enemy (the devil) whose solid aim and purpose is to kill, to steal and to destroy-nothing more! (John 10:10). Understanding his three-point agenda can help us say resist the devil no matter what. Also, this can open our eyes to the fact that whatever the devil offers comes along with a poison or even death. The Bible admonishes us to submit ourselves to God and resist the devil. Don't negotiate with him, just resist! Don't waste time discussing with him, just resist him and stand your ground as our Lord Jesus Christ did in Matthew 4. Many end up in his trap in their attempt to negotiate with him. To resist him, you must put on the full armour of God every day and everywhere. This armour consists of: Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Faith, Salvation, The Word and Prayer. Carry them along and never hesitate to use them when the devil comes knocking.

Self-Reflection: The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10 (NIV)

Daily Confession: Dear Lord, help me put on your full armour each day.

Intercessory prayer: May righteousness rain in our nations.

Hymn: Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin,
Each victory will help you and others to win,
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through

Beware of Greed (I)

And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses". Luke 12:15 (NKJV).

Bible Reading: Luke 12:13-21

Greed is the immoderate desire for something. It is the obsessive longing or desire to have more especially for one's self even at the detriment others. Jesus gave the parable of the rich fool in response to a man's plea to ask his brother to give him his own share of the inheritance. Being an heir is not wrong in itself but Jesus who sees beyond the physical understood the condition of the man's heart and used it to warn us against greed. It is important to note that Jesus was not in any way desiring us to be poor, for if it were so, He wouldn't have become poor that we might be rich. The central message here is contentment. The scripture says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it, Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction" 1 Timothy 5:6-9 (NIV). The love of money, position, power and material possession is the problem. God desires that our hearts centres on Him, He wants wealth to serve us and not the other way round. He wants us to know that a person's true life is not made up of the things he owns no matter how rich he may be, rather the true riches is in seeking and loving for God and His people. Therefore, our focus should be to seek spiritual treasures (being rich towards) above mammon so that we can be like Jesus. Dear friends, riches are not everything. Why would you covet other people possession when riches are just a mere addition to your life when you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Matthew 6:33

Self-Reflection: Godliness with contentment is great gain.

Action Point: Resolve with the Lord's help seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Daily Confession: Lord Jesus, help me be contented with what you've given me.

Intercessory prayer: Lord I pray for your blessings upon orphans, widows and widowers today in Jesus name.

Hymn: I need Thee oh, I need Thee;
every hour I need Thee;
oh, bless me now, my saviour!
I come to Thee

August 3rd

Beware of Greed (II)

This is how it would be with whoever stores up treasures for themselves but is not rich towards God? Luke 12:21 (NIV).

Bible Reading: Luke 12:13-21

Yesterday we defined greed as an unholy and immoderate desire for something or the longing to have more especially for one's self. We saw the need to have a good heart disposition towards riches by being contented. This is because a person's true life is not made up of the things he owns. Taking a close look at the parable Jesus gave, you will notice that the rich fool was concerned only about himself even after his field yielded an abundant harvest. This was evident in his language. Looking at how the New Living Translation puts our text, you will notice that just between versus 17-19, the rich fool used words that alluded to himself many times. No wonder Jesus warned us against greed! The moment we indulge in the least form of greed, the more it grows into a giant that would finally sift us away from God. Gehazi, the servant of prophet Elisha was an example. Gehazi who would have been the successor of Elisha and possibly inherit a double portion of his anointing (the quadrupled anointing of Elijah) aborted his ministry because of greed (2 Kings 5). Dear friend, the way to avoid greed is found in Jesus' admonition: "watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed" for "This is how it would be with whoever stores up treasures for themselves but is not rich towards God" vs 21.

Self-Reflection: If God demands your soul tonight what will be your fate?

Action Point: It is no longer I but Christ

Daily Confession: Dear Lord, help me be rich towards you and also consider others better than myself.

Intercessory prayer: I pray for fresh unction to function for my pastors and ministers of God.

Hymn: I need Thee oh, I need Thee;
every hour I need Thee;
oh, bless me now, my saviour!
I come to Thee (SS&S 577)

August 4th

Take Roots in Christ

Have the roots [of your being] firmly and deeply planted [in Him, fixed and founded in Him], being continually built up in Him, becoming increasingly more confirmed and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and abounding and overflowing in it with thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:7 (AMP)

Bible Reading: Colossians 2:6-7

Whenever a plant begins to grow, the first thing is that it grows roots downward before shooting up. This is because if it would ever become fruitful, then it must allow its root settle in the soil to access nutrients, minerals and water which are necessary for its growth. The deeper the roots, the more the nutrients it accesses and the stronger the plant becomes. Similarly, as believers we ought also to have our roots firmly and deeply planted and rooted in Christ. We have to fix our gaze on Him and our hope founded on Him. The more established we are in Him the stronger we grow to withstand the storms of life. The deeper our roots get in Him, the more the nutrients of His word we tap to overcome the world. How have you handled your personal walk with God through the study of his word, prayer and fellowship with other believers? According to Isaiah 53:2, Jesus grew before God like a tender shoot, and like a root out of a dry ground (Isaiah 53:2), then you and I ought to also grow. Don't give excuses for your lack of growth because Jesus grew out of a dry ground (unfavourable conditions), lush and fertile ground (favourable condition), or a perverse environment. Growth must be deliberate and with the help of the Holy Spirit who teaches us the word and enables us with grace to walk with God.

Self-Reflection: How have I handled my growth in Christ?

Action Point: I will meditate on your word each day

Daily Confession: May I grow to be like you Jesus.

Intercessory prayer: I pray for my friends that they may grow deeper in Jesus Christ.

Hymn: Take me deeper, deeper in love with you,
Jesus hold me close to your embrace,
Take me deeper, deeper than I've even been before
I just wanna love you, more and more
How I love to be deeper in love.

The Word

And God said, "Let there be light, and there was light. Genesis 1:3 (NIV)

Bible Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

All through the scriptures, God never did a thing without His Word. Anytime He wants to proffer a solution He sends forth His Word. In the beginning when the earth was formless, empty and full of darkness, He sent forth His Word into action by saying "Let there be". Anytime He desires to help anyone or save a nation, He sends forth his word. In fact, to save humanity from eternal damnation, He sent forth Jesus (the Word made flesh - John 1:14, 3:16). At the wedding at Cana (John 2) Jesus' mother instructed the servants saying, "do whatever he tells you". This is because there is power in whatever utterance that comes out of God's mouth. As a child of God, know that the solution to your present situation lies in the Word. The current crises the world demands the Word of God if it must be resolved. This Word is Jesus, for "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father full of grace and truth, John 1:1, 14 (NIV). Therefore, first go for Jesus Christ and the inspired Word of God in every situation.

Self-Reflection: Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119:105 (NIV)

Action Point: I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.

Daily Confession: Dear Lord, help me to spend time with the Word daily.

Intercessory prayer: I pray for my country that our love for God will be restored.

Hymn: More about Jesus would I know,
More of His grace to others show;
More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me

August 6th

Jesus, Our Pattern

But in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. Hebrews 1:2 (NIV)

Bible Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4

In the Old Testament, the Prophets and Priests mediated between God and men. Prophets like Elijah, Moses and Isaiah received instructions from God to His people. In fact, only the high priest had access to the Holies of holies. Although God wrought miracles through these prophets, He has in these last days chosen to reveal himself to us through His Son, Jesus Christ because “the Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” vs 3. More than the prophets, Jesus Christ who was tempted in every way and yet was without sin has been made the perfect pattern for us. God said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” Matthew 17:5 (NIV). Although it is good to learn from the lives of people who are spiritually ahead of us, we should note that they have their weaknesses. In fact, God expects them to point us to the person of Jesus and not to themselves. This is because you can never miss your purpose in life and eternity if you pattern your life after Jesus by the help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus must be our pattern if we will ever measure up to God’s standard.

Self-Reflection: Who have you patterned your life after?

Action Point: What Would Jesus Do? Will be my response for every situation, so help me God.

Daily Confession: Lord Jesus, help me follow You and point others to You.

Intercessory prayer: May leaders who will serve be raised for us in our nation.

Hymn: Follow! Follow! I would follow Jesus!
Anywhere, everywhere I will follow on.

August 7th

Acceptable Offering (I)

“The Lord was pleased with Abel and his offering, but he rejected Cain and his offerings” Genesis 4:4-5 (NIV)

Bible Reading: Genesis 4:1-7

Giving is an important aspect of worship in the church. It is an act of expressing gratitude and appreciation to God for all he has done in ones’ life. In as much as giving tithes and offering is important and necessary, God desires another important offering from His people first. Looking at the offering Cain and Abel brought before God, you will notice that one offering was accepted and the other was rejected. Notice also that in vs 4-5, God accepted Abel first before his offering and rejected Cain before rejecting his offering, “The Lord was pleased with Abel and his offering, but he rejected Cain and his offerings”. It is glaring that God wants his people to offer themselves first as living sacrifices holy and acceptable before him (Romans 12:1), before any substance they may want to give, for only then will their substance be accepted. This is so important that Jesus said that when you come to the altar to give and you remember that your brother has something against you, drop your offering and go and settle it first before coming to give your offering. Settling grudges with people leaves us with a good heart disposition to give an acceptable offering. May we be wise to give ourselves first to God so that our offering can be acceptable unto Him.

Self-Reflection: God accepts us first before He can accept our offering.

Action Point: I give myself to You oh Lord

Daily Confession: Lord, help me offer my body to you as living sacrifice each day

Intercessory prayer: I pray for the peace of my community. No evil shall before any one in Jesus name.

Hymn: Take my life and let it be,
Consecrated Lord to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise (SS&S 616)

August 8th

Acceptable offering (II)

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)

Bible Reading: 2 Corinthians 9:1-11

Apostle Paul writing to the church in Corinth reminded them of their promise to give (vs 5). He had boasted to the Macedonian church about their good attitude and willingness to give. He sent some brethren ahead to get ready the gifts they had promised. Paul reminded them of the benefits of sowing generously and the need to give willingly and cheerfully and not out of compulsion. Many Christians today are too reluctant when it comes to giving generously. This has caused many pastors to go to the extreme of coining ways in order for their members to give. God hates such deceptive gimmicks. And unwilling giving doesn't attract God's attention like it did when that poor widow gave all she had (Luke 21:1-4). Believers must learn to give generously without being cajoled "for God loves a cheerful giver" (vs 7). Whenever God gives us the opportunity to give in church or to the needy, it is actually a privilege made open to bless us (vs 6). As you give your time, energy and whatever resource God has blessed you with, don't make a public show of it like the hypocrites do so that your heavenly Father who sees what you do in private will reward you. Matthew 6:1-4.

Self-Reflection: Give and it shall be giving to you.

Action Point: Start giving generously for the work of God or whenever the Lord brings a needy your way.

Daily Confession: Stir up my heart to be passionate towards giving.

Intercessory prayer: Lord raise godly leaders who will serve you with the whole of their heart.

Hymn: Take my life and let it be,
Consecrated Lord to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise (SS&S 616)

August 9th

Is This Too Much a Demand?

And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy-the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Romans 12:1 (TLB)

Bible Reading: Romans 12:1-2

As believers, many times we feel God is making too much a demand on us especially when everyone around us seem to be doing something we know God will be unhappy with if we do it. We encounter scriptures like, “meditate on the law day and night”, “watch and pray”, “Don’t be unequally yoked with unbelievers, nor conform any longer to the pattern of this world”, “thou shall not steal, kill or commit adultery” etc., Some budding Christians may feel that these are hindering them from enjoying the best life can offer. The devil can paint such pictures in our hearts to create hatred in our hearts towards God. The truth is this: Every instruction God gives us is for our own good. For example, when he says, “give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy-the kind he can accept” it means he doesn’t want us getting our bodies involved in activities like promiscuity that may result in unwanted pregnancy (leading to abortion), or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) that may later lead to a painful or regretful life which may later lead to death on earth and eventually total separation from Him in eternity. Vs 2 made it clear that obeying these instructions enables our minds to discern God’s good and perfect will for us. Apart from the benefits we get when we obey God’s instruction, if we think about His suffering on the Cross for our salvation, is it too much to obey God’s instruction?

Self-Reflection: When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?

Action Point: Deliberately offer the members of your body to God

Daily Confession: I’m sorry Lord for the complains I’ve made about your instructions towards me.

Intercessory prayer: May this generation know Jesus and serve Him wholeheartedly.

Hymn: Take my life and let it be,
Consecrated Lord to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise (SS&S 616)

August 10th

Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!

*For you yourselves know that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief comes at night. 1
Thessalonians 5:2 (GNT)*

Bible Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

As the clock ticks each day without returning, we draw closer to the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Someone once said, we are currently at the tail end of the end. The love of many has waxed cold. Many have become tired of waiting and have joined the world to wine and dine in sin. As it was in the days of Noah, people ate and drank and men and women got wedded up to the very day Noah went into the boat. Yet they did not realize what was happening until the flood came and swept them away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes (Matthew 24:37-39). Don't say you will repent some minutes or days before Jesus comes or before death knocks your door. This is because, as a thief comes in the night, so shall the coming of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ be. As a child of God who eagerly anticipates His coming, "cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry". Hebrews 10:35-37 (KJV).
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus.

Self-Reflection: Are you ready for rapture?

Action Point: Live with eternity in view!

Daily Confession: Prepare your church Lord for your return

Intercessory prayer: I pray for the salving of my family members, friends, colleagues etc who are yet to encounter Jesus.

Hymn: Jesus is coming again, he is coming and he shall reign

August 11th

Content of the Heart

Your word have I treasured and stored in my heart, that I may not sin against you. Psalm 119:11

AMP

Bible Reading: Psalm 119:9-11

Faith is a fight and there are forces wrestling against our faith. Many things we see, hear, and learn daily are not God-centered or designed to advance intimate relationship with God through Christ Jesus. Also, what fill the heart through music, films, practices, and knowledge among others are great influence in our life. Today's reading gives us a recipe; essential ingredient Christians need to live a life devoid of sin. It is simple: "Keep God's word in your heart"! The psalmist inquired how a young man can keep his way pure, holy and righteous before the Lord and his query was answered.

The truth is that we are products of what dwells in our hearts, no wonder the Bible admonishes "let the word of God dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:18). The psalmist, king David resolved that God's word occupied his heart; it is a deliberate act, a lifestyle borne out of love for God and desire to have a deeper relationship with Him. God's word is kept in our hearts when we continually study, meditate, speak, and live it. Dear beloved, don't you think you should resolve like king David about the content that you will permit into your heart? We have to understand the place of our eyes because the heart sees through the eyes. Hence, pay attention to what you see, and the thought that dwells in your heart so that you can fight a good fight of faith.

Self-Reflection: I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? Job 31:1

Action Point: To what extent do you hide God's word into your heart?

Daily Confession: Lord help me to be committed to keeping Thy word in my heart; melt away every evil within me and help to fix my gaze on You in Jesus name.

Intercessory prayer: Lord I pray for provision for the needy, help me to meet someone's need today in Jesus name.

Hymn: Tis so sweet to walk with Jesus,
Step by step and day by day;
Stepping in His very footprints,
Walking with Him all the way.

August 12th

Health Meter I: The Heart

*“A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of”
Luke 6:43 (NIV)*

Bible Reading: Luke 6:43-45

Medical experts reported that a normal adult’s resting heart beat is between 60-100 beats per minute. This could rise significantly in response to adrenaline or during exercise. Heartbeat rate can help determine the strength of an individual’s heart. Just as a healthy heart pumps the requisite blood for the proper function of the body, the state of a believer’s heart determines the kind of fruit he bears and how far he pushes the agenda of the kingdom. No healthy heart fails in performing its duty. Show me someone with a spiritually healthy heart and I’ll show you a heart that pursues God’s agenda. In fact, someone with such a heart (e.g. Apostle Paul) cannot sit down and watch others go to hell. Such a person will also not cower when light is needed in darkness. The evidence that the driving force of your life is God is the fruit of righteousness emanating from your life. The attitude of any believer toward matters of the kingdom is a true reflection of the condition of such heart. What is the driving force of your life? Is it money, women/men, fame or earthly rewards? Remember, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God”. Matthew 5:8 (NIV).

Self-Reflection: Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. Philippians 4:8

Action Point: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your strength, and with all your mind Luke 10:27 (GNT)

Daily Confession: Create in me a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me

Intercessory prayer: May God continue to keep our missionaries

Hymn: Change my heart oh God, make it ever true;
Change my heart oh God, may I be like you.

August 13th

Health Meter II: The Tongue

We get it wrong nearly every time we open our mouths. If you could find someone whose speech was perfectly true, you'd have a perfect person, in perfect control of life. James 3:2 (MSG)

Bible Reading: James 3:1-12

Any time a person goes to a physician for a medical check, the physician uses some basic meters to determine whether or not the person is healthy. Before rushing to conduct a lab test on the person's blood, stool and urine, he quickly checks the tongue which gives signs (if there exist) of anaemia, vitamin and iron deficiency as well as other infections. Our text today shows explicitly that our spiritual fitness is directly linked to the utterances of our mouth. Amplified translations says, "if anyone does not offend in speech [never says the wrong things], he is a fully developed character and a perfect man, able to control his whole body and to curb his entire nature". If you notice your tongue uttering lies, abusive words, vulgar words, negative words about yourself or others or you even swear, it is a sign that you are spiritually sick and you urgently need the great and perfect physician (Jesus) to fix you up. In Him was no sin and no one ever heard a lie from His lips; when insulted He did not answer back with insult (1 Pet. 2:22).

Self-Reflection: "Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies" Psalm 34:13 (NIV)

Action Point: Start speaking the truth and the right words today

Daily Confession: Help me tame my tongue oh Lord.

Intercessory prayer: Pray for those in prisons and correctional facilities for a total turn around in their lives. May they encounter Jesus.

Hymn: Take my lips, and let them be fill with messages from Thee (SS&S 616)

August 14th

Health Meter III: The Eyes

*“The eyes are the lamp of the body. If your eyes are sound, your whole body will be full of light”
Matthew 6:22 (GNT)*

Bible Reading: Matthew 6:22-23

Yesterday we examined that the tongue is a good indicator or a meter to check whether or not a person is healthy both physically and spiritually. It was glaring to us that our spiritual fitness and perfection is directly linked with the utterances of our mouth. Today’s study focuses on the eyes, another good health meter. Doctors often check the eye because it is one spot that reveals particularly a large percentage of health issues. Dr. Charles Wilkinson, a retina specialist with the American Academy of Ophthalmology says, “it is the only place you can see blood vessels bouncing along their merry way, you can see the optic nerve, which is part of the brain”. Just as the eyes are a clear window to your health, they are also the window to your soul. Your life becomes what you behold. If they stay clear of the lust of the eyes that is rampant in our media today by focusing on God’s word and on things above, our body will be full of light. However, if they are engrossed in pornography and crave for materialism and fashion, your body will be full of darkness. Don’t get captured by darkness that has engrossed the world system today, rather fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Self-Reflection: “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman” Job 31:1 (NIV)

Action Point: Fix your eyes on Jesus

Daily Confession: Deliver me Lord from every darkness that has engrossed my life through my eyes

Intercessory prayer: I pray for deliverance for as many suffering from lust in Jesus name.

Hymn: God make my life a little light,
Within the world to glow;
A little flame that burneth bright,
Wherever I may go (SS&S 1143)

August 15th

Health Meter IV: The Ears

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Proverbs 1:8

Bible Reading: Proverbs 1:8-33

Human ears play an important role in our daily lives. The ability to recognize, and appreciate sound and the anything auditory is made possible by the ear. What you hear has great influence over your life. For instance, someone becomes a medical doctor after many years of hearing information from the field of medicine. Also, oral cultures appreciate the significant role the ear plays in preserving culture, stories, and traditions. Beyond hearing is listening; it transcends the physical hearing but engages the totality of our senses in order to discern and understand what is implied. The question is: what and who do you listen to? The content you hear is a product of who is behind it and it determines who you will hearken to.

When you start listening to contents that are contradictory to God's word, you need to take caution. Seeing goes with hearing many times, while the eyes retains the visuals, the ears retains the sound. Prophet Samuel learnt to listen to God; after he heard his name being called twice, he ran to his master, Eli. Finally, Eli instructed him to respond, "Speak for your servant listens". When was the last time God spoke to you? Is your ear blocked by wax of ungodly music, ungodly conversations etc that you cannot hear God again like before? Take a decision to call unto God to melt every wax, sharpen your ears to hear Him and for your heart to be attuned with Him.

Self-Reflection: You cannot hearken to who you don't listen to. Learn to listen to God.

Action Point: Run a Word test of the music and media content on your phone, computers etc.

Daily Confession: Lord may I not be a victim of spiritual decay. I call unto You to melt every wax, sharpen my ears to hear You and for my heart to be attuned with You in Jesus name.

Intercessory prayer: I pray for God's healing for the sick at the hospital.

Hymn: Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise
Let them flow in ceaseless praise

August 16th

The Forgotten Grace

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteousness, and godly, in this present world. Titus 2:11-12 (KJV)

Bible Reading: Titus 2:11-15

In this era of grace, we are often quick to present the message of the amazing grace of salvation that we forget to present the same grace that is responsible for sanctification. We preach God's love, His grace that is gotten not by works lest anyone should boast. We often ignore the fact that grace is not a license to sin or continue in sin. Like Apostle Paul cautioned: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Romans 6:1-2)

Our reading today reminds every user of this devotional; Christians, preachers, workers and the church at large that God's amazing grace that bring us to salvation has been released unto us and through it, we are taught to live godly lives, shun unrighteousness, lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life. The same way we embrace God's grace that saves and redeems us, the same we should embrace sanctification, purity and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Always remember that grace is a teacher of righteousness; grace speaks to us to deny ourselves of ungodliness and live for God alone.

Self-Reflection: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.

Action Point: Learn to listen to the voice of grace that teaches righteousness

Daily Confession: Lord I embrace God's grace to live a righteous and holy life and I choose to listen to the voice of grace.

Intercessory prayer: Lord deliver as many that are enslaved in any sin or wrong habit.

Song: Grace, grace, God's grace
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sins.

August 17th

Nothing is Impossible

I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is there anything too hard for me? Jeremiah 32:27

Bible Reading: Isaiah 43:19-21

It was the year 1974, Phillipe Petit, the high-wire artist accomplished what seemed impossible for any man. He walked between Twin Towers of World Trade Centre in New York. The world recognized, applauded, and honored him for being dauntless, determined, focused, and bold to have walked between two 411 meters buildings. In fact, the renowned Guinness World Record archived his achievement because he did what has never been done in human history. However, in 2015, another dauntless climber, Freddy Nock bagged a new world record. He walked between two Swiss mountains that were 3,532 meters above sea level. If we as human beings could do what seemed impossible to other people, how much more God, the creator of heaven and earth?

God is the Almighty who can do all things. He made all things, and without Him, there is nothing made. Today, God's word is reassuring a reader of this devotional that He is still in the business of making way where there seems to be no way. He is still healing, transforming, providing, cleansing, surprising and fulfilling His word. No matter your present circumstances, simply hold on to God's word, believe in Him, and keep hanging on to His promise because God will do just as He has promised (Numbers 23:19). Moses and the children of Israel were not stranded by the Red Sea because God simply made a way on the sea for His children to pass through unharmed. He fought many battles for the children of Israel and beyond these examples, I am a living example. Dear friends, trust in the Lord because He is the creator of heaven and earth and with God, nothing is impossible.

Self-Reflection: Are you a living testimony of God's intervention?

Action Point: Reflect on the things God did for you in time past and praise Him.

Daily Confession: Lord I believe that You are able to do all things, therefore, I worship You.

Intercessory prayer: Pray for someone's need today.

Song: Nothing is impossible for Thee x2

Great and mighty God

Great in counsel and mighty in deed

Nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing,

Nothing is too difficult for Thee

August 18th

Parent, think about this.

Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel? I Samuel 2:29

Bible Reading: I Samuel 2

Today's reading reveals the truth about prophet Eli. Although it is undisputable that Hophinis and Phinehas, his children, played a significant role in the downfall of his ministry, however, Eli master-minded his own destruction. First, as a father and a prophet, Eli must have done what was contrary to God's command that both his biological and spiritual children emulated (I Samuel 2:13). When God sent a messenger to Eli, the first-person God addressed was Eli. God accused him of scorning His sacrifice and offering -a state of disregard, and disrespect for God. No wonder Eli's children, (and priest's servant) had the temerity to plunge their three-prolonged fork into the pan of meat meant to be sacrificed unto God. While God didn't accuse Eli of sexual immorality, He accused him of honouring his children more than Him. I can imagine Eli sharing the bounties with his children, and refused to caution his children when they grew into that act. Let's not point too many accusing fingers at Eli, right?

As parents, do you honour God? What are you doing that can mislead your children? What habits have you formed overtime that can positively or negatively affect your children? Parents have big influence on their children, so take responsibility to train your children in God's way. Be watchful of your utterance, the media content you consume, your friends, and what you do because children are watchful and they are likely to emulate their immediate contact persons. Parents, remember to train up your child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Ultimately, continually pray for them and teach them how to pray.

Self-Reflection: Think of one thing that you can do better for your children to emulate.

Daily Confession: Lord help parents across the world to teach their children in the way of the Lord. Deliver children from disobedience and rebellion, and restore as home that have derailed from You in Jesus name.

Intercessory prayer: I pray that my children will be like olive shoots around my table in Jesus name.

Hymn: Open up to your parents, open up.
Open up to your parents, open up.
For you know your parents love you,
They're the best ones who can help you,
But it's up to you to come and open up.

August 19th

Giver of Hope

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13 (NIV)

Bible Reading: Romans 15:13

It is interesting how many scholars have agreed that we are at the end time – characterized by godlessness, chaos, disorder, corruption, lust, greed, and wanton destruction among others. In fact, we continue to search for hope for a different future. However, the more we search for it, the more it seems elusive because there is no hope without God for He is the giver of hope and life. Anyone who has Jesus Christ, has hope, joy and the peace of God that transcends all human understanding. We have hope not only about our existence here on earth but we have hope for eternity.

Dear friends, Jesus Christ is the giver of hope. So next time when you hear or watch news about the bizarre happenings in the world, pray that the light of the gospel of Christ may shine into this darkened world, and spread the gospel of Christ Jesus in deeds and in words. As children of God, we should be the source of hope to others because we should be carrier of God's Presence. Let's continue to live according to God's leading and pray so that we can impact lives as God gives the grace.

Self-Reflection: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13 (NIV)

Action Point: Share the word of God and be a source of encouragement to someone today.

Daily Confession: Lord Jesus come, shine the light of Your hope upon us afresh that we may be fill with your joy and peace in Jesus name.

Intercessory prayer: I pray for as many that are in need of hope, may they encounter Hope.

Hymn: My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus name.

August 20th

Rewarded Service

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. I Corinthians 15:58

Bible Reading: Hebrew 6:10

As I write this study, I just received good news from some brethren that we have been praying and trusting God concerning certain things in their lives. We have prayed, and fasted together; in fact, we have searched God's word to strengthen our faith, after all, faith comes by the word of God (Romans 10:17). There were times that I was discouraged but God kept encouraging me through His word, "My grace is sufficient for you to support and encourage those in need", so be devoted.

Reward is sweet, isn't it? The reward I speak of is not material things or earthly favour but it is the joy of fulfilment that fills one's heart when brethren share testimonies of their progress that you have co-laboured and trusted God for. The thanksgiving unto God, the joy of fulfilling a divine assignment, the testimonies that seal their blessings, and also the encouragement for other brethren are real. As shepherd, parents, and brethren etc, it is important that we learn to hold-on to God's word with and for others. Don't give up even if the going gets tough, rather stay immovable, without fear or doubt. Stand firm and tenaciously believe God for yourself and for others. Be vigilant in prayer for the brethren, and believe and trust God for their testimonies. Always remember, the labour of your love will never go unrewarded, therefore, do all things cheerfully as unto the Lord.

Self-Reflection: In what ways can I be a source of encouragement to others?

Action Point: Pick someone that you can constantly intercede on their behalf concerning a need in their life

Daily Confession: Lord thank You for fulfilling Your word in the lives of Your people, help us to remain supportive of one another and to hold-on to you till the end.

Intercessory prayer: Intercede for that person

Hymn: 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word;
Just to rest upon His promise;
Just to know, Thus saith the Lord.

Embrace Wisdom

Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee. Proverbs 2:11 (KJV)

Bible reading: Proverbs 2

In today's reading, we are reminded of the benefits of wisdom. It unveils essential actions needed to gain wisdom for living. First, it starts with accepting God's word and keeping it in our heart. The psalmist says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). The preacher teaches us how to do this; turn our ears to wisdom, and apply God's word in our hearts. There is a need to daily seek God for insight, understanding and knowledge. It is an exhortation to embrace wisdom in our daily living. Wisdom is ultimately found in the word of God, thus, let God's word be your guide; study it, meditate on it and live by it. The Holy Spirit who is the Teacher is there to guide and instruct, so we have to learn to walk with Him. And here is the result: you will be preserved and kept for wisdom is fruitful and productive. God bless you!

Self-Reflection: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James 3:17).

Action Point: Plan to daily study at least one chapter from God's word.

Daily Confession: Lord I receive Your wisdom in Jesus name.

Intercessory prayer: I pray for God's wisdom for everyone in my life.

Hymn: O boundless Wisdom, God most high,
O Maker of the earth and sky,
Who bidst the parted waters flow
In heaven above, on earth below.

August 22nd

Meet Thy Creator

He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth- the Lord God Almighty is his name.

Amos 4:13

Bible Reading: Romans 11:33-36

God is the Creator of all things. Human's ability and capacity to create different things is because he is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:28). From the book of Genesis to revelation, God's unending capacity to create is obvious. In fact, you don't have to turn to the book of Genesis alone before you see God's inventions and innovations, they are evident in our lives. In today's reading, prophet Amos rightly presents God's unfathomable creative power to us. He used words like form, create, make, and tread/turn. These words are majestic, powerful, authoritative, and significant. Amos captured God's divine power to create even from nothing; His authority in heaven and on earth, and His willingness to step into any situation for a total turn around. For a reader of this devotional today, God is stepping into your situation to intervene. He is making a way where there seems to be no way, and removing every stumbling block your way so that you can live for Him. He is shining light in the midst of darkness and bringing every high places low because He is the Almighty God. God is still doing creative things and creative ways for His children. I encourage you to call on His name today in holiness for He is always ready to listen and answer us whenever we call.

Self-Reflection: God's creative power is still at work today

Action Point: Present your needs to God today in the name of Jesus

Daily Confession: Lord I thank you because all things testify to Your creative power. Let Your creative power be at work in my life today in Jesus' name.

Intercessory prayer: Lord heal our land.

Hymn: Oh, how praying rests the weary!

Prayer will change the night to day.

So, when life gets dark and dreary,

Don't forget to pray

Keep the Fire Alive!

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Romans 12:11

Bible Reading: Judges 14

Although Samson had flaws, he was one of the zealous characters in the Bible. His zeal was instrumental to his victories. Anytime the spirit of the Lord came upon him, his zeal was alive, refreshed, renewed and refocused. He single-handedly killed thousands of philistines during his life time. In his achievement, he ranked significantly with David's mighty men. Zeal is important in keeping our passion alive. Zeal or enthusiasm plays an important role in many aspects of our lives. For instance, if you get to an office, it is easy to notice staff member working with zeal and enthusiasm and those working without it. Zeal is a lubricant that helps one function well. It also set people apart. Even God has zeal (Isaiah 9:7), Isn't that wonderful? No wonder his faithfulness is new every morning.

When your spiritual fervor is alive you will never give in to weariness, and distraction. It is important that you keep things new and fresh in your life and in your relationship with God. Apostle Paul's instruction is timely because there is need to encourage Christians across the world to keep their faith alive. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrew 12:2a). Next time you notice that you are losing your zeal for God, remember that the Holy Spirit has been generously given to us. Call on the name of Jesus and trust the empowerment that comes from the Holy Spirit of God.

Self-Reflection: The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish that which God approves.

Daily Confession: Lord I receive strength for my weakness, and grace to carry me through the journey ahead. I am zeal for God based on right knowledge.

Intercessory prayer: Lord ignite the fire of our youths so that they can zealous for God.

Hymn: I'll sing of the wonderful promise
That Jesus has given to me;
My strength is made perfect in weakness,
My grace is sufficient for thee.
And lest my poor heart should forget it,
Or ever forgetful should be,
He still keeps repeating the promise,
My grace is sufficient for thee.

August 24th

Continually Abide

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. John 15:4 NKJV

Bible Reading: John 15:1-8

If there won't be situations that will threaten our relationship with God, Christ Jesus won't command and also encourage us to abide in Him. Our God sees the end from the beginning and that's why He is the Alpha and the Omega. 'To abide' is to wait without yielding, and to endure. Jesus used another powerful metaphor for us to understand the importance of our relationship with Him. The metaphor of the tree gives different meanings ranging from life, nurturing, fruitfulness, relationship and nourishment. Just like a branch is unable to stand alone without the stem, the same way genuine Christians cannot stand without connecting to the Source, which is Jesus Christ.

Few years ago, I remember going to the forest with my father to cut down some. What he did was to cut the branches away from the stem and after few days, the once blossomed branches became dead and lifeless because there was no support or nourishment from its source. As Christians, we are reminded that for it is "in Him we live, move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Hence, our daily devotion, or quiet time, study of the word, consistent prayer life, and living the life of the word to the glory of God simply keep us connected to and united with Him. Perhaps you have disconnected from God, turn to Him today in total repentance and call upon the name Jesus Christ.

Self-Reflection: For in him we live, and move and have our being.

Daily Confession: Lord help me to remain in You. I confess of my separation from You today.

Intercessory prayer: I pray for teachers who are teaching my children for grace and patience. May they be positive influence over my children in Jesus name.

Hymn: God has called us into the fellowship of His Son,
That we may partake of Christ and enjoy Him
As our unique center and as our God-given portion.
God has called us into the fellowship of His Son.

August 25th

What Do You Call This Race?

Holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. Philippians 2:16

Bible Reading: Hebrew 12:1-3

I attended a program that lasted few days. It was so short that we finished a program worth three months in six days. It was a one-time experience and participants exerted all the energy, zeal, and sacrifice needed within those days. The race was simply a sprint.

However, the Christian race is a marathon; continuous, and it never ends until Jesus Christ Second Coming or until we take our last breath. Unlike my fast-tracked program where I rushed and finished everything in few days, the Christian race needs continuous zeal, and perseverance. It is neither a life lived on the Sabbath day alone, nor is it a life that is for few days. Rather, it is a life of continuous fellowship and relationship with God. Like every other race, it is timed, there is a crown to be won, there's a mark set before us and there are clouds of witnesses surrounding us. While you cannot determine when it will end, you can determine how you run the race by following the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here's the question today: how are you running the Christian race set before you?

Self-Reflection: Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. (1 Corinthians 9:24)

Action Point: Evaluate your Christian life today.

Daily Confession: Lord help me that I may run this race according to Your blueprint.

Intercessory prayer: Pray for strength to fight a good fight of faith for Christians across the world.

Hymn: Christian, walk carefully, danger is near;
On in thy journey with trembling and fear.
Snares from without and temptations within,
Seek to entice thee once more into sin.

August 26th

Crushed But Not Destroyed

We are hard pressed on every side, but not in despair, persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed - 2 Cor. 4:8-9

Bible Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

The Psalmist speaks: "they have greatly oppressed me from my youth, but they have not gained the victory over me. (Psalm 129:2). King David stayed around for long; imagine he was anointed as a king at age of seventeen but he did not really become a king until he turned thirty years of age. He was betrayed; hated and sorted to be killed on several occasions but God saw him through all these things. David became one of the most influential, rewarded, impactful and loved king of all time. In fact, he was treasured by God that he was referred to as 'a man after God's heart'. Tribulations will always come in destiny journey but how we handle them is important. That is, what we make of our choices is important. Despite the various problems and troubles that King David faced, he stood and became victorious.

In today's reading, Apostle Paul outlined various problems they encountered as apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. Reading through the book of Acts of the Apostles, one will realize that those apostles encountered lots of troubles just for the sake of Christ Jesus. However, Apostle Paul summed up his life vision in these words: 'that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering...' (Philippians 3:10). Interesting, many Christians start grumbling God when faced with little troubles. What our mindset and attitude should be when faced with troubles is engraved in today's devotion 'crushed down but not destroyed' because our Heavenly Father, assures us that He will be with us regardless of what we are passing through (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).

For a reader of this devotional, God assures that He will be with you just be of good cheer. You can be crushed but never to be destroyed. You can be pressed on every side but never in despair and you can be struck down but never destroyed. Let the truth of these words bring relief, faith and confidence in God and face that problem with total trust in God.

Self-Reflection: Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. (Hab. 3:17-18)

Action Point: Give God praise for His ever-abiding presence over you and all yours.

Daily Confession: Lord I choose to reconcile my ways with You today. Show me your mercy and stop the accuser for my sake. Amen.

Intercessory prayer: I pray for God's grace and strength for as many passing through tough times.

Hymn: Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife:

August 27th

A Selfish Generation

During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of David. 2 Samuel 3:6

Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 3:6-13

Many times, I wonder if there was no one who could have called king Saul to order. It's noted that God took the kingdom from him, and prophet Samuel left him alone. King Saul made a series of choices about David that were outrageous and evil. Was there no one who could have counseled him against those choices? Interestingly, someone who would have advised the king kept quiet refused to because of selfishness.

Our focus character today is Abner. He was king Saul's cousin and the commander-in-chief of his army. He was the king's right-hand man, and he was almost like the second-in-command to the king. In those day the war lord played a significant role because he is in charge of the army. We don't know if Abner counseled the king Saul against his wrong moves against David; rather it was recorded that Abner followed him in hunting David (I Samuel 26:13-15). The root of his attitude was his selfishness. While the king was busy with the irrelevant, working and warring against the house of David, Abner was benefitting and strengthening himself. When he was meant to stand up for the right thing, and speak up against king Saul's unwise decisions, Abner was silent. Eventually when king Saul died and Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son spoke up to Abner about his adulterous acts, he threatened to restore the kingdom to David. Abner knew God's will about David, which means perhaps he knew that king Saul's vehement pursuit to kill David was wrong. Perhaps a truthful counsel from Abner would have saved king Saul, but Abner wouldn't do that because of what he will gain from chaos and disorder. As a leader, friend, parent, and even shepherd etc., what truth are you withholding from others because of your personal benefit? In what ways do you allow personal gain to blind fold you from speaking or standing for the truth?

Self-Reflection: This generation is plagued by the ailment of I, Me, and Myself. Are you not affected?

Action Point: Repent of selfishness today!

Daily Confession: Lord rid me of self.

Intercessory prayer: Intercede for this generation and the unborn generation.

Hymn: O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints and angels, song.

August 28th

Am I Not a Prodigal Son?

When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! Luke 15:17

Bible Reading: Luke 15: 11-32

Today's story speaks of a son who in his wildness requested for his inheritance from his father. He relocated to a different country and squandered his inheritance. There was a severe famine in that country and he joined himself to a citizen of that country, and sent himself into his fields to feed swine. He longed to eat of the pig's pods but no one gave him. Finally, he came to His senses and he returned home, to his father who received him wholeheartedly.

The younger son is called the "prodigal" son. Prodigal means "to be wild, reckless, and out of control". Many relationships, homes, lives, destinies, and government have been destroyed because of wildness, recklessness and lack of self-control in different areas. The prodigal son played even with his father, requested his inheritance even when his father was still alive. That was a simple way of wishing his father was dead because property is not shared until the owner's death except the owner chooses to. The prodigal son separated himself from his father's authority and control. He purposefully rejected his father's way. He turned his back away from his father's kingdom and set out to establish a kingdom of his own. Are you not like the prodigal son who opted out of his father's authority?

Praise to God that the prodigal son finally "came to his senses" and returned to his father. At times difficulty inspires a return to God. Many nations returned to God because of difficulties, failures, and challenges. In fact, misery can be a blessing if it leads to a new beginning. Just like the prodigal son, who returned home after struggling to eat pig's pod, God is calling you today. Drop your guard, arrogance and embrace God because He loves you and He wants to fix you.

Self-Reflection: Misery can be a blessing if it leads to a new beginning.

Daily Confession: Lord I ask that You restore Him in Jesus name.

Intercessory prayer: Lord restore our sons and daughters who have gone away from you in Jesus name.

Hymn: I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me,
I am glad that Jesus loves me
Jesus loves even me

August 29th

Don't Learn the Hard Way

When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!" Luke 15:17

Bible Reading: Luke 15: 11-32

There are relationships, families and homes that have been destroyed because of pride, and arrogance. Some have learnt the hard way because they refused to humble themselves, learn or yield to instruction. Anytime God speaks and we obey, we are preserved. For instance, the city of Nineveh after hearing God's word from prophet Jonah hearkened to God's instructions and that city was preserved. Many times there are misery that we pass through are not God's purpose, rather, they are product of our disobedience. When couples fight and quarrel each day because both are trying to play even and they are not ready to submit to each other, their lives will be full of unhappiness, disorder and discord. A student that refuses to study will learn from failure; and anyone who commits adultery or fornication will learn when he or she contracts sexually transmitted diseases etc. A sinner will reap the consequences of his or her sin even after God's forgiveness.

Here's the point: The prodigal son like many of us learnt the hard way. Don't learn from your regrets and mistakes which could have been avoided if you had listened and obeyed simple instructions. There are relationships, homes, and families going through chaos presently because both partners are not willing to submit to another; pull down your guards, embrace God's instruction and choose live. Finally, choose Life and not death; choose Jesus He is the Way, the Truth and Life, and He gives life in abundance.

Self-Reflection: Don't choose to learn the hard way if it can be avoided.

Daily Confession: Lord I repent of my disobedience and recalcitrant attitude. Let Your mercy prevail over my life.

Intercessory prayer: May our children enjoy God's guidance and the gift of right relationships and friendship in their lives.

Song: Jesus my hope
My only hope
Jesus my only hope
My soul has found a resting place
In Jesus my only hope

When Obedience Turned into Slavery

So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him" Luke 15:29-30

Bible Reading: Luke 15:29-32

We have been examining Jesus' parable of the lost son for the past few days. Summarily, the prodigal son requested, and collected his own portion from his father's inheritance, took off to a different country and squandered his allotted inheritance. Happily, he came to his senses after hardship and unpleasant experience, and he returned home. His father happily received him and threw a party for him. Today's exhortation is centered on the older brother who stayed at home to serve the father obediently and dutifully. When he returned home perhaps from one of the errands his father sent him, he heard music and the sound of celebration from the house. Perplexed and confused, he inquired to know the reason for the celebration and he was told that his younger brother had returned. The older brother became furious because his father never threw any party for him despite his obedience, loyalty and faithfulness. He defended himself and presented his self-righteousness to his father especially because what he has done is highly commendable.

Like this older brother, many Christians have this attitude. They complain when things aren't going on well with them, and compare themselves to that unbeliever who is not living according to God's word. They also defend themselves; present their good works and righteous living as a condition for God. In fact, they forget that man's righteousness is like a filthy rag before God. At this point, obedience turns slavery because they feel they are missing on life. However, in times like this, it is important to always remember the father's response: "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours" (Luke 15:31). The father's response is not only soothing, assuring and powerful, it reveals the provision we have as faithful children of God. So next time when you are about showing up this attitude of self-righteousness, remember this truth and repent of such attitude immediately.

Self-Reflection: What's the implication of the father's response to his son as Christians

Daily Confession: Lord I stand in Your righteousness and faithfulness. Help me not to take glory in self-righteousness.

Intercessory prayer: Pray for your country and its leaders.

Hymn: Look and live, my brother, live
Look to Jesus now, and live;
'Tis recorded in His word, halleluyah!
It is only that you, look and live.

The Unnamed Character

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48

Bible Reading: Luke 15:11-32

As we end the study of the parable of the lost son, I want to draw our attention to a character which was never mentioned in the story but perhaps implied. This character is neither the younger brother nor the older brother, neither abandoned the father for worldly pleasure nor stayed behind for self-righteousness. It seems this character is a hypothetical figure but truly, the attributes of these two sons presents the possibility of another option. The unnamed character is the one that is redeemed by Christ Jesus whose nature of sin has been dealt with (1 John 2:1; 3:9).

Jesus' teaching on the mount culminated in this command: "be ye perfect as my father in heaven is perfect". I have had a series of discussions about this biblical verse and many still believe that it is not possible to live a perfect live. However, God is not wicked to demand of His children what He knows they are unable to give. Hence, God's children are called unto perfection because His divine power has given to us all that pertains to live and godliness through the knowledge of Him (2 Peter 1:3). As children of God, His grace that brings salvation also teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust (Titus 2:7). We have at our disposal all that is needed; the word of God, and the Holy Spirit. The unnamed character in the parable of the lost child is the one that abides in Christ Jesus (John 15:1), and obeys Him (1 John 2:5) not for the gain but for the love. He or she doesn't acclaim self-righteousness but chooses to rely on the strength of God because it is God that is at work in us both to will and to do for His pleasure (Phil. 2:13). Therefore, "whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:5). Love for God becomes the motivation in all things and that's when we can live exactly the way God desires.

Self-Reflection: "Whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:5).

Daily Confession: Lord help me to see Jesus Christ as the author and the finisher of my faith that I may truly abide in Him forever. Amen

Intercessory prayer: Pray for our essential workers for God's covering over them.

Hymn: Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.