



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Monday, 5/4/20

Author: Will Majors

Proverbs 22:6 (CEB)

*Train children in the way they should go;
when they grow old, they won't depart from it.*

I'm a father of two boys but I'm not the only one molding them and I believe this is a good thing. I don't have all the answers and my perspective is limited. My wife has different life experiences and knowledge that she can use to teach the boys. But it is greater than just the two of us. My boys will grow into who they will become partly based on interactions outside the home. Some interactions will carry less weight than others. Sometimes it will not be apparent what impact the person had on my boys' life until farther down the road. A relationship which seems minor at the time could greatly affect the future.

Read the proverb: no limitations or restrictions are placed on whose child should be trained up. Wherever you are at, no matter the setting, when a child is in part of your circle of influence use the time wisely to make a positive impact on them. We have no idea what the child has experienced in the past or are experiencing in that moment. You could be the light in the darkness for that child. Kind words and gestures could do wonders when they are experiencing sadness, despair or not feeling great about themselves.

Prayer: Lord, keep my eyes open for opportunities to be the light in the darkness, especially for the children.

Tuesday, 5/5/20

Author: Bridget Coughlin

I John 3:1 (CEB)

See what kind of love the Father has given to us in that we should be called God's children, and that is what we are! Because the world didn't recognize him, it doesn't recognize us.

When I started school at CMSU (now UCM), my parents gave me a choice. They would pay for my education or pay for a used car. They could not afford both. I chose college. That meant whenever I wanted to come home, I had to wait for my Dad to get off work and drive to Warrensburg to pick me up. I did not have the same relationship with my Dad that I had with my Mom. So, I found the rides home uncomfortable.

My Dad was a product of his generation. He was a Depression survivor and WWII Navy Vet. He was witty, taciturn and unable to express his emotions. I knew he loved me, but not because he told me.

I noticed every time he came to get me, he had melting, vending machine candy bars sitting on the front seat. I was surprised because he did not like candy bars. He never said anything about them. On about the third trip home, I finally asked him why he had the candy. He answered without making eye contact, "I got them from work. I thought you might be hungry." I was flabbergasted! Why hadn't he offered them to me? It was an expression of his love and yet, he couldn't verbalize it.

Are we that way with God? We have so many reasons to love Him but we often don't show it. He would "sell the whole world to get us back." He's waiting to hear how we feel about Him in our actions, behaviors and words.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we love you. We love you because you first loved us. We love you because you sacrificed yourself to give us eternal life. We love you because we are your children. Thank you, Lord.

Wednesday, 5/6/20

Worship Wednesday

"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Every Wednesday we look at a modern worship song or traditional hymn as a community. We hope this song will add an element of worship to your devotion life. Songs have a way of getting into your bones and giving words to a situation you may be facing or a mountaintop moment you are experiencing. There will be a link to the song and some of the scripture references used in the song as well as the lyrics. We hope you will listen to the song with the lyrics in front of you. If there is a part that sticks out to you, read that part aloud. Let that part of the song be your prayer for the morning.

James 1:17 (CEB)

Every good gift, every perfect gift, comes from above. These gifts come down from the Father, the creator of the heavenly lights, in whose character there is no change at all.

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLKSYUJ9ysY>

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it, mount of Thy redeeming love

Here I raise my Ebenezer, here there by Thy great help I've come
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God
He, to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood

Oh, that day when freed from sinning, I shall see Thy lovely face
Clothed then in the blood washed linen, how I'll sing Thy wondrous grace
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry, take my ransomed soul away
Send Thine angels now to carry, me to realms of endless day

Oh, to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be
Let that goodness like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above

Thursday, 5/7/20

Author: Gary Mountz

Ephesians 4:28 (CEB)

Thieves should no longer steal. Instead, they should go to work, using their hands to do good so that they will have something to share with whoever is in need.

Scripture speaks to our working for sure. Speaking corrections to followers of Jesus we read, *“He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have and be able to share with one who has need.”* (Ephesians 4:28) In the context of Paul and his entourage “working night and day to not be a burden to you” he admonishes the church, *“If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat either ... we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all ... we command and exhort in the LORD Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion ...”* (Second Thessalonians 3) And a scripture the LORD quoted me in my heart one day when I was asking Him to give me a better boss, *“Whatever you do (occupation), do your work heartily (from the heart), as for the LORD rather than for men.”* (Colossians 3)

So that settles it. Work. This is our lot. More evidence? In Genesis Adam and Eve were put to WORK in the Garden before they sinned so work isn't the result of being sinful, it just became unbelievably harder after the sins. (Genesis 2 and 3) So we settle down in life like all our neighbors and work for a living. Then we find John 6:27 and Jesus takes work to a new level, a wonderful, holy, new level.

“Do not work for the food which perishes (spoils), but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the son of Man will give to you,” He said. Whoa! You mean I don't work for an income to take care of my needs?

Day in, day out, routinely we work diligently to take care of yourself and family. You know, food on the table, roof over your head, clothes on your backs and of course other modern essentials which we won't name. But I read Jesus saying something so radical He can't possibly mean it as it simply reads. There must be a great secret or mystery here. Actually, there is a great, great truth revealed here, in these simple, sane, stark words. To miss it, ignore it or dismiss it will have tragic consequences. To agree to live according to this wisdom is remarkably liberating to say the least and the beginning of knowing the truths of God and our relationship to Him and **His Fatherhood relationship with us**. This knowing and believing concludes in wonderful worship of His majesty. We move into a joyful place, being ushered into His presence, aware at a whole new level of His loving care and taste of ultimate purposes for us on this planet as His children.

So, what does he mean with “don't work to put food on the table ...”? Simply, we work for a different purpose: for eternal purposes. You see we have jobs and the ensuing relationships and interactions for us to be there for Him and them. To be reconcilers: to bring God and people together on friendly terms as He said in Second Corinthians 5:16-21. The context of this passage is “we no longer see according to the human ideas or purposes, but as New Creatures” (my paraphrase). To be there to do His bidding, which means to do as Jesus did, the Son of God in a human body, **being led of God the Father to say and do as He leads**. To help us “jump start” this new life, in Matthew 5-7 Jesus details what it's like to be led by the Father. Practically everything you need to know about how you will be led is referred to there. To not go there and read these will leave you unprepared, so I encourage you to read what God has revealed for your sake, for your preparation to walk in the Spirit as Paul calls it.

We all seem to know, usually in hindsight, that nothing is just happening per chance but we seem to be on an orchestrated trajectory, once a life seemingly moving about without aim, but, actually **we've been lifted to a new place, a higher place**: one in the continuous Presence of God destined to bring Glory to Him for all eternity.

He will take care that all our needs are met so I'm free to pursue the eternal work of reaching others with His works and words. Yes, liberated to live for Him and others, not myself.

Work? Yes, Work as though eternity depended upon it. Work the work of trusting God to take care and be His person wherever He has placed you.

Prayer: Father, you've again taken us to a new place. What the world sees as simply jobs, careers, occupations is not that at all. We are here for You and You are in us for us. "The LORD is my shepherd, what in the world could I want?" Love you LORD Jesus. Thanks and Praise; well done, well done.

Friday, 5/8/20

Scripture Fridays

"Hebrews 9"

Every Friday, we read a section of scripture together. There is a larger section of reading for these days. We believe immersion in scripture changes people from the inside out. On Fridays we hope you spend your time reading the section, knowing that our entire community is reading scripture together. If you cannot get through the whole section, that is totally fine! Read it in one sitting, read it throughout the week, read it any time you have free time. Any reading will be a gift to your spiritual life. Each week you will receive the next chapter of the scripture for your personal reading. We will provide you with the CEB translation. We hope you will continue to ask the questions: What? What is the scripture saying? No, really, what did it actually say? So what? Why is this important? What does it reveal about God? Now what? The Bible is a book of action. What is your action? May God bless this reading each week.

Hebrews 9 (CEB)

Christ's service in the heavenly meeting tent

So then the first covenant had regulations for the priests' service and the holy place on earth. ² They pitched the first tent called the holy place. It contained the lampstand, the table, and the loaves of bread presented to God. ³ There was a tent behind the second curtain called the holy of holies. ⁴ It had the gold altar for incense and the chest containing the covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides. In the chest there was a gold jar containing manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above the chest there were magnificent winged creatures casting their shadow over the seat of the chest, where sin is taken care of. Right now we can't talk about these things in detail. ⁶ When these things have been prepared in this way, priests enter the first tent all the time as they perform their service. ⁷ But only the high priest enters the second tent once a year. He never does this without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins the people committed in ignorance. ⁸ With this, the Holy Spirit is showing that the way into the holy place hadn't been revealed yet while the first tent was standing. ⁹ This is a symbol for the present time. It shows that the gifts and sacrifices that are being offered can't perfect the conscience of the one who is serving. ¹⁰ These are superficial regulations that are only about food, drink, and various ritual ways to wash with water. They are regulations that have been imposed until the time of the new order.

¹¹ But Christ has appeared as the high priest of the good things that have happened. He passed through the greater and more perfect meeting tent, which isn't made by human hands (that is, it's not a part of this world). ¹² He entered the holy of holies once for all by his own blood, not by the blood of goats or calves, securing our deliverance for all time. ¹³ If the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkled ashes of cows made spiritually contaminated people holy and clean, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Jesus wash our consciences clean from dead works in order to serve the living God? He offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit as a sacrifice without any flaw.

Christ's death and the new covenant

¹⁵ This is why he's the mediator of a new covenant (which is a will): so that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance on the basis of his death. His death occurred to set them free from the offenses committed under the first covenant. ¹⁶ When there is a will, you need to confirm the death of the one who made the will. ¹⁷ This is because a will takes effect only after a death, since it's not in force while the one who made the will is alive. ¹⁸ So not even the first covenant was put into effect without blood. ¹⁹ Moses took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the Law scroll itself and all the people after he had proclaimed every command of the Law to all the people. ²⁰ While he did it, he said, This is the blood of the covenant that God established for you. ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled the meeting tent and also all the equipment that would be used in the priests' service with blood. ²² Almost everything is cleansed by blood, according to the Law's regulations, and there is no forgiveness without blood being shed.

²³ So it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be cleansed with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things had to be cleansed with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ Christ didn't enter the holy place (which is a copy of the true holy place) made by human hands, but into heaven itself, so that he now appears in God's presence for us. ²⁵ He didn't enter to offer himself over and over again, like the high priest enters the earthly holy place every year with blood that isn't his. ²⁶ If that were so, then Jesus would have to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. Instead, he has now appeared once at the end of the ages to get rid of sin by sacrificing himself. ²⁷ People are destined to die once and then face judgment. ²⁸ In the same way, Christ was also offered once to take on himself the sins of many people. He will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.