

BE STRONG
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**MAY
DAILY
DEVOTIONALS**

BY MIKE KEYES, SR



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

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MAY 01 DAILY DEVOTIONAL John 11:26 - DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?

One of the best ways to stay focused on earth in this life is to always remember that as spirits, we'll never cease to exist. That's what Jesus was talking about here in today's verse, as He was talking to Martha about her brother's sudden death. As Martha and Mary grieved over the passing of their beloved brother, Jesus reminded them that there is another life, another dimension, that is far more in every respect than anything we know of in this life. And I think this is one of the strongest elements to our Christian faith, the fact that we'll never cease to exist, that we're ETERNAL beings who will never die. Listen carefully to what Jesus told Martha, because it has far-reaching implications for how we live and move here on earth. He said: WHOEVER lives and believes in Me WILL NEVER DIE. And then He asked a question: DO YOU BELIEVE THIS? Well, do you? Do you believe in Jesus? If so, take heart that no matter how badly things may go for you in this life, there is another life waiting beyond the curtain of death that is FAR BETTER!

Of course, Christians will immediately declare their faith in the fact that when they die, they'll go to Heaven to be with Jesus. However, when you look at the way most believers live now in this life, you can plainly see they don't really have a working revelation about their eternal nature. Why is that so important? Because if you live this life in constant awareness of the next life, the eternal one, it will have a radical effect on how you set priorities. Just take one look at how most so-called Christians spend their time, use their money, or set their priorities, and you can see everything is focused on THIS LIFE, not the next one! But my friend, you WILL NEVER DIE! That's what Jesus said, isn't it? Physically, our bodies grow old and die. But our spirits are eternal and will live forever. So, EVERYTHING you do down here on earth must be done with eternity in mind. When you do this for yourself, you automatically position yourself for blessings from God, because He won't hesitate in dumping all kinds of blessings on you in this life if He knows you could care less! Does that make sense to you? It does if you're heavenly-minded, rather than earthly-minded. So, challenge yourself today. Look at your life, and really ask yourself how aware are you that your life here is only temporary - a stepping stone to the eternal life beyond. YOU WILL NEVER CEASE TO EXIST! Realize that, remember that, and live this life accordingly!



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MAY 02 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

John 11:40 - HEALTH BRINGS GOD GLORY

There is much confusion out there in the body of Christ over what brings God glory when it comes to the issue of sickness and disease. Many have the erroneous idea that suffering in sickness, and doing it with the "right" attitude, brings God glory. My friend, nothing could be farther from the truth. In today's passage, Jesus clarifies this truth with an exclamation point of Divine healing, bringing Lazarus back from the dead. If you read all of chapter 11 from John's gospel, Jesus had already told Martha that if she would believe, she would see the glory of God. Well, what brought God glory in this chapter? The raising of Lazarus from the dead, what else? When Jesus told them to roll away the stone covering the grave entrance to Lazarus' tomb, Martha protested. But what did Jesus remind her of? What He had told her a few verses earlier. If she would BELIEVE, she would see the glory of God. God got the glory my friend, not when Lazarus got sick and died, but when Jesus raised him from the dead. You see it all through the Bible. Sickness and disease are a result of the fall of man and the work of the devil. God is the Healer, curing and healing those who believe - not the One making people sick, or killing people prematurely with sickness or disease.

Acts 10:38 tells us that Jesus went about doing good, HEALING ALL WHO WERE OPPRESSED BY THE DEVIL. Doesn't that say it as plain as day? Satan oppresses people with sickness, and Jesus heals them. Period! Do you want to bring God glory? Then believe for your healing, and when you get it, God gets the glory! Or, if you're not the one needing healing, go out and in the Name of Jesus, find sick people and lay hands on them. When they get their healing, God gets the glory! Why? Because by the stripes of Jesus WE WERE HEALED (1 Peter 2:24). If we were, then we are, now! But as simple as this is from the Bible, we've got multitudes of people out there who genuinely believe, and teach, that God puts sickness on people to "teach them lessons", or some other ridiculous explanation that's just as dumb and scripturally ignorant. God isn't making people sick my friend. The devil is the one doing that. Go back and see that sickness and disease weren't even in the picture until Adam gave his dominion and authority to the devil in Genesis chapter 1. And, when Jesus comes back to rule and reign in the future, and the devil gets removed from the scene once and for all - guess what? Sickness and disease will be no more then as well (Revelation 21:4). So, settle this issue once and for all in your minds. Healing bring God glory, not sickness. Health brings God glory, not disease. You want to glorify God? Get healed and stay healthy!



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MAY 03 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Psalms 63:1 - GET STARTED EARLY!

Communion with God is supposed to be the most important part of your day. It is, without doubt, top priority as far as God is concerned, so it should be with you too. The Bible says that they who WAIT upon the Lord shall have their strength RENEWED (Isaiah 40:31). That's why it's so important to find time each day to just wait upon God, and commune with Him. In fact, **THE MORE YOU WAIT, THE STRONGER YOU GET!** Finding time to wait upon the Lord each day is crucial if we're to finish running our race for Jesus – stronger at the end than at the beginning! It is imperative we resist the daily urge to let the busyness of the day crowd out our time with God.

And when you go to finding time with God, what's the best time of the day? Well, the Bible talks about seeking God EARLY, over and over again. You'll find that theme repeated throughout scripture, the inspired recommendation to seek God early in the day, before the hustle and bustle begins. This was, in my opinion, one of the keys to the success of men like David, who, in our verse today, declares his eagerness to seek God EARLY. In other words, to put God FIRST each day, and to do so early in the morning. I know in my own life, the more I discipline my flesh to rise early to seek God, the stronger I am, the more focused I become, and the better I get at handling the day's challenges and responsibilities. If I let my early-morning time with God slide, it doesn't take long before I'm noticing it spiritually. I'm not as sharp to the voice of the Holy Spirit. I have more of a struggle to maintain the love walk. And, most importantly, I lack the inner strength to ward off the temptations of the enemy. So, let me encourage you as I encourage myself today. Get into the habit of seeking God early each day, before everything else. You'll be stronger spiritually for having made such a decision.



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MAY 04 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Proverbs 2:3-5 - THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK!

The Bible tells us to cry out for discernment, and to seek the knowledge of God. To do that, you must ask questions. And, because of that, God has put many questions in His word. Some of the questions He will ask of us, and then again, some of the questions we should ask of Him, or of ourselves. For the next few days, we'll look at what I consider to be the 3 of the most important questions of life. We'll find out what they are, where they are in the Bible, and why they're so important. Do YOU know what those questions are?

James tells us that we have not BECAUSE WE ASK NOT (James 4:2). Jesus said to ask God, and after asking, to believe the answer is given (John 16:24). Asking questions is how we locate ourselves in life, and find out what is, and what isn't, truly important. So, if you haven't been asking the right questions, now is the time to start! The Bible will show you not only the questions to ask, but the answers you need to receive. Knowing the important questions, and the answers to those questions, will make the difference between a wasted life, and a powerful, anointed, fruitful life for the glory of God. Which do you prefer?



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MAY 05 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

John 18:38 - THE FIRST OF THREE QUESTIONS MAN MUST ASK

Yesterday, I told you we were going to look at 3 of the most important questions in life. Today we examine the first of those three. Its voiced out by Pilate, as he is interrogating Jesus prior to our Lord's passion and death on the cross. When Jesus replies and tells Pilate that He came to bear witness to the truth, Pilate will ask: WHAT IS TRUTH? That's the first question man must answer for himself. WHAT IS TRUTH? Ever since Adam, the devil has tried to keep the truth from us to deceive us and thereby, destroy us and damn our soul to hell forever. And all over the world today, millions of people are dead in their sins and in spiritual bondage, simply because they don't know the truth. They search for it without end; paying large sums of money to educate themselves in hopes of finding it, or to have some "professor" reveal it to them, and then philosophize about what it is, or where it might be found. There was even a still-popular TV series that is no longer on the air, called the X-Files, which used as it's catch line the phrase: THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE!

Well, the good news is that the truth IS out there! Where? Right in front of you if you own at least one Bible. Jesus said it as plain as day in His great intercessory prayer of John chapter 17. He said to God: "Sanctify them (us) through your truth, YOUR WORD IS TRUTH." (John 17:17). Notice carefully how the Holy Spirit worded this, and how Jesus prayed it. He said God's word IS truth. He did NOT say God's word contained a portion of truth, or was a truthful book, or had lots of true statements in it, or anything else like that. He said God's word WAS, and IS, truth! And isn't it amazing, that men will spend their whole life, and tons of money, to find what the Bible already reveals. Anyone who holds a copy of God's word in his or her hand is looking at truth. You don't need to go off to some university of ignorant deception to find the truth - God's word IS truth. It IS the benchmark, the standard, the accurate measurement for EVERYTHING that is out there, and you don't need any X-File to find it! And everything you are or will ever become, is based upon your knowledge of the truth of God's word. No one can challenge it because it was before any of us were ever even created. Since eternity past, God's word is truth. It IS, and that's it! Men may scoff at that, but it doesn't matter. God knows, the devil knows, and smart people on earth know too! Are you smart? The only way to get smart is to first of all find and identify the truth. If you've looked at John 17:17, you now know! So, stay smart and never let anyone cause you to doubt the truth - which is God's word. That's it, and the end of all argument about truth.



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Acts 16:30 - THE SECOND OF THREE QUESTIONS MAN MUST ASK

The second very important question to ask is the question the Philippian jailor asked Paul. "SIRS, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" The first of these three important questions in life dealt with the discovery of truth, which according to John 17:17, is the word of God. Now that you establish that in your thinking, where do you go from there? Well, the truth (God's word) says that ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), which means that God had to send us a Savior who could save us from us, since clearly, we couldn't save ourselves from our own sins. Hence, the next important question is this - how does a man secure eternal salvation when the truth (God's word) plainly says that without Jesus, we're all sinners, lost and on our way to hell? This is the question all intelligent people should ask, once they realize the truth is God's word. And, praise God, the truth (God's word) gives us the answer to that question.

When the jailor asked Paul that critical question, what was his answer? "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND YOU SHALL BE SAVED." (Acts 16:31). Notice what was NOT said. Paul did not tell the jailor that Jesus was one of many ways to salvation, but that He was the ONLY way. Believe in Him, and in His substitutionary work on the cross, and make Him the Lord of your life. Do that, and you will be saved! Simple! It only requires faith, nothing more. Not works, just faith. Faith in what? Faith in the work Jesus did for all of us - a work none of us could do for ourselves. This is the question ALL men must ask if they're to find salvation and spend eternity with Jesus in heaven. The sad thing is that many people ask the question but get the wrong answer! Why? Because they never answer correctly the first of these three questions, which is: WHAT IS TRUTH? That's why there are so many religions out there, because the devil tries to camouflage the truth with lies and deception, and religion is one of his best weapons to use. Reject the truth, which is the Bible, and you cannot answer correctly the second question. There is only one way to God's promised salvation, and its through Jesus. That's the TRUTH, because that's what the Bible says. To reject Jesus is to reject the free gift of eternal life. He is THE way, THE truth, and THE life (John 14:6). Always remember the correct answers to the right questions, and you'll protect yourself all the way to the finish line of your life!



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Acts 9:6 - THE THIRD OF THREE QUESTIONS MAN MUST ASK

The third very important question to ask in life is found in our verse today, where Paul is being confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus. As Paul was on his journey to Damascus to arrest and jail Christians, he met the Lord in that miraculous encounter on the road. Once he realized who he was talking to, Paul blurted out this all-important question to Jesus: WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? That's it! That's the question all of us should be asking God constantly. Why? Because once we've established knowledge of the truth (question #1), we find out how we get saved (question #2), and once we have the answers to those two questions, the next logical step will be to get involved with God to spread this knowledge to as many as we can in the Name of Jesus. Hence, the third very important question is this - WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU JESUS?

Have you been asking that question lately in your prayer time with the Lord? Are you actively involved in the business of soul-winning, and discipling Christians towards a deeper walk with God? Are you a player, and not just a spiritual spectator? You see, everything God gives to you is supposed to be shared with others. You need to remember that, because many Christians become disoriented and distracted with the cares of this world when they forget this truth. All the knowledge you have about the truth, the way to salvation, and the eternal state of affairs - all of that is to be SHARED with others, not just kept to yourself in some selfish spiritual way. Yet, this is what we see everywhere. Christians doing NOTHING to spread the gospel to others they live with, work with, go to school with, spend time with, etc. But, when Paul encountered Jesus that very first time on the road to Damascus, what was his first question? WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU? That's so important because God can't bless what you don't do! His blessings, and all His promises, are for those active in evangelism. It's that simple. So, if you haven't been asking that question lately, you need to go before the Lord and ask it. You need to be DOING His perfect will, and that will always involve outreach to others in some way. It's easy to criticize what others are doing for the Lord - many lazy Christians do that all the time. But instead, they should be out there doing whatever the Lord wants for them to do, and never mind what others are, or aren't, doing! So, let me encourage you today. Find out what God wants you to do - and do it with all your might! Your life will have purpose, fulfillment and joy, because you're doing what the Lord wants you to do!



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MAY 08 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Luke 18:14 - MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGEMENT

This is one of my favorite stories in all the four Gospels. I love it because it so clearly shows the heart of God, and the hypocrisy of religion. Beginning in vs.9, and going all the way to vs.14, we see two men going into the temple to pray. One is a Pharisee, a very religious man who thinks his good works somehow make him a better man than the other. The second man, however, is just crying out for mercy, knowing how badly he's messed up and failed God. Amazingly, Jesus says it is this man who goes home justified, not the religious guy! You see my friend, God is not at all impressed with our "works", whatever those may be. He's after our heart and is always looking at us from that perspective and no other. People can look great on the outside, like the Pharisee in today's story, but be rotten and corrupt on the inside. On the other hand, people can fail God a thousand times, but if God knows their heart is right, and they're trying their best to improve, He'll work with them and never forsake or abandon them.

Going to church, paying your tithe, being involved in outreach at church, and all the other things we do, don't give us anymore of a place in God's heart than anyone else! When it comes to the love that God has for us, its equal across the board. God is no respecter of persons. But what God doesn't like is for man to start thinking to himself that somehow, he's QUALIFYING for God's love, and EARNING God's acceptance. This was the problem with the Pharisees. They had this "I'm better than you" mentality, and God hates that kind of thinking. The Pharisee thought to himself: I'M SO GLAD I'M NOT LIKE THIS OTHER GUY! LOOK AT ME GOD! SEE HOW RELIGIOUS I AM, NOT LIKE THIS OTHER PERSON HERE! That kind of thinking stinks as far as God is concerned. The fact is, we're ALL lost and undone in sin if not for the mercy of God every day! And that's what the other man understood. He fully recognized the fact that he had sinned - repeatedly. But he also fully recognized the awesome love and mercy of God, and came to Him to pray based on that, and that alone. He knew his sole point of perspective with God lay with an understanding that in spite of all the sin and failure, God still loved him and would never give up on him. Oh Christian! What a truth we need to know! Friend, stop thinking you're going to please God because of all your religious works, and stop thinking you're somehow better than others because you've gone off to some Bible school somewhere and gotten diplomas and certificates. We're all under grace, and we're all at the mercy of a loving God! And THAT is the basis for our relationship with Him. That and that alone! Be like the sinner in today's verse and story. Just go to God, thank Him for being merciful to you, and never mind trying to impress Him with all your good works. And for sure, NEVER start thinking you're in anyway better than others out there. Why? Because as far as God is concerned, you're no different than anyone else! We're objects of God's love, not because of what we do or don't do, but simply because we ARE! Once you realize you will NEVER earn His love, you can relax and just let Him mold you and develop you and make your life one big satisfying ride, with or without all the religious trappings!



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MAY 09 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Matthew 20:26-27 - LEADING FROM THE BACK OF THE PACK

If you want to be blessed and get “ahead” in life, you need to understand the power of servanthood. Most people have this all backwards, and that’s why they haven’t been able to tap into God’s flow of anointing, power and provision. Why? Because they fail to see that EVERYTHING in the kingdom of God is based upon the principle of serving. Jesus Himself set the tone and gave the ultimate example of this. In our verses today, He plainly told us that even He did not come to be served, but to serve others. Whom did He serve? His heavenly Father, of course. And because He lived to serve God, He also became a servant of other men too, because that’s what God expects from all of us. Too many times people have the wrong attitude about how they relate to others around them, and even in how they relate to Almighty God. Most people want to be served, and even when dealing with God, they have a mindset many times that makes God nothing more than their glorified servant! But that’s backwards my friend! Jesus came to serve God and serve us for God. We’re supposed to live our lives with the same mentality. First of all, we serve God, and obey Him. Then, because we’re serving Him, we become servants to all those around us. That is the lifestyle that leads to the blessings of God, because if you voluntarily put yourself at the back of the line, in honor preferring others before you, God will promote you and bless you.

How much of a servant’s heart do you have today? Are you living and prioritizing your life according to God’s desires for you? Are you a true servant of the Lord? These are the questions you should be asking yourself constantly. It’s not all about people serving you my friend. It’s all about serving God and serving others in the Name of Jesus. That’s it! From that platform, you live your life and make your plans. God does not exist to serve you, rather, it’s the other way around. Now of course, God expects us to exercise our dominion, and walk in the authority we have in Christ, but that must always be done under the umbrella of knowing that above all, we’re serving God. We walk in divine dominion, and exercise our authority BECAUSE we’re serving God, and we must never forget that. You know, servants do what they’re told to do, right? The servant doesn’t tell his or her employer what to do, it’s the other way around. So, as God’s servants, our number one job each day is to take time to worship the Lord and get from Him our assignments that we’re to carry out in the Name of Jesus. He tells us what to do, and we do it. Simple. Servants obey their masters, because if they don’t, they know they’ll be fired or dismissed. Well, many of us have forfeited God’s anointing and blessings because we’ve lost site of the fact that as Christians, we’re to serve God with all our heart each day, and that our happiness and fulfillment in this life does not depend on what others do for us, but instead, on what we’re doing for them as servants of the most High God. Jesus did not come to be served He said. He came to show us all the life of a servant of God. He came to serve others. That’s what we’ve come for also. Remember that, and you’ll find God moving you to the front of the line, in His time, and for all to see!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

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MAY 10 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Philippians 1:6 - RELAX! GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH YOU YET!

When you got saved, and gave your life to Jesus, the process of sanctification began in your life. From the moment you became a child of God, the Holy Spirit took up residence in your spirit, and from that position, is now at work sanctifying you and making you more and more like Jesus. That is his primary assignment for believers - to make them mirrored reflections of Jesus. And this work is an on-going process that never ends - it will continue until Jesus comes or you go home to be with Him. So, when you are frustrated with yourself, and disappointed with your words or actions, don't let the devil condemn you or discourage you from continuing on with God. You've seen those road construction signs that say CAUTION MEN AT WORK? Well, God is at work within you, and in Philippians, it says that He is working within you, to will and to work of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). You are a work in progress, so relax and let God do His work within you!

If God is truly allowed to do His work within us, we'll be looking and sounding more and more like Jesus as the days go by. Is this what's happening in your life today? If not, you're either losing ground, or just treading water, and neither of those is pleasing to God. Unfortunately, many Christians start out so "on-fire" for God, but over time, lose that edge, and allow their enemies to once again have a place in their hearts and lives. In other words, they're not letting His work continue within them. Instead, they're allowing their flesh to regain a place of influence in their lives, and when that happens, we see people becoming more like what they were BEFORE they knew Jesus, and that's backwards! According to our verse today, God is wanting to do an on-going work of sanctification in each of us, to bring us to the place where Jesus is more and more in control of our lives, from the inside out. The Holy Spirit wants to take us and mold us into mirrored reflections of Jesus, so that when people see you they are actually looking at Jesus! Now again, you might be thinking of all the many times you've disappointed God with carnal words or actions, but don't get discouraged over that! We've all done that with God, many times in fact. But, God's not done with you yet, so if you don't quit on Him, the process will go on because He sure won't quit on you! God's not finished with you yet my friend. So, relax and let Him continue to do His work within!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 11 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

1 Peter 5:6 - PAYDAY IS ON ITS WAY!

Our verse today reminds us all that if we humble ourselves, submitting to God's will in our lives as servants of the most-High, payday will come! In due time, according to God's plan and schedule, one day, all the decisions made to keep our flesh under will pay off. God is promising that one day, our payday will come! Promotion will come! Acknowledgement of our lives of obedience will be made for all to see. God Himself is preparing for the day when He has the good pleasure of rewarding us for the choices we make now in this life. Payday is on its way my friend, and it can't be that far off! One day very soon, God will call you up in front of everybody, and openly reward you for the decisions made that pleased Him while you lived here in this life on earth. What a glorious day that will be, no?

Do you like candy bars? I usually don't eat such things, but recently, in my office, I pinned a PAYDAY candy bar up on the wall so I could see it every time I'm there. It reminds me that every decision I make down here that agrees with God's will for me, will one day reap rewards in my life for His glory. In this life, and in the next life as well. You need to close your eyes from time to time, and just remind yourself that payday is on its way. God hasn't forgotten you my friend. He knows exactly who you are, where you are, and the decisions you've made to stand your ground and be pleasing to Him. He WILL reward you. He WILL honor you. He WILL bless you. Of that there can be no doubt. Your payday is as sure as the sun coming up tomorrow. So, take heart dear one! No matter how bad things may look today, payday is coming! No matter how desperate you may feel now, payday is coming! Make the right decisions now, put on God's helmet of hope, and get ready for the great payday in your life. In this life and in the next, God will honor your faith, and He will bless you for the right decisions you've made down here. Don't despair. Go buy yourself a Payday candy bar, and if you plan to eat it, do so with your hands in the air, thanking God that His payday for you is on the way! Absolutely! For sure! Things may not look so good right now for you, but remember, payday is coming. God doesn't always pay up on the 1st and 15th of each month, but friend, He WILL take care of you. Never forget that!



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MAY 12 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Mark 9:10 - LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THE RESURRECTION

When you think of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, what does that do for you? How do you take that event and apply the power of it to your life individually and personally? When the disciples were first told about it, they questioned among themselves what this could mean? Well, there's a lot of Christians out there who still haven't found out! Yes, they embrace the event in a general way, but they've never really meditated on what our Lord's rising from dead meant for humanity as a whole, and for them in particular. How about you? Are you living in the light of Christ's resurrection?

When Jesus rose from the dead, He rose triumphant over hell, death, the grave and the ravages of sin. He rose as the One who conquered the devil on our behalf, and is now seated in Heaven at God's right hand, declared to be Lord of all forever! I was just meditating in a verse recently in Colossians that addresses this very truth. Colossians 1:13 says that we **HAVE BEEN** delivered out of the kingdom of darkness and **TRANSLATED** into the kingdom of God's Son. That is a past tense fact my friend, courtesy of what Jesus did when He rose from the dead. The Resurrection is the most important event that has ever taken place on earth. Even more important than the actual creation itself, for without the Resurrection, all of us, as God's created handywork, were doomed to hell through the fall and sin. So, had Jesus not risen from the dead, salvation and hope would not be possible for any man anywhere. And this is what makes us different from all other religions. We don't serve a dead leader. We serve a living Jesus who the Bible says is the same as he was before he was murdered (Hebrews 13:5). And guess what else? The devil is **TERRIFIED** of Him, and **YOU**, since you're living in Christ and one with Him as a member of the body of Christ. So if you haven't yet done so, start living in the light of Christ's resurrection. Christ Jesus has truly risen from the dead, but the question is, is He risen in you?



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MAY 13 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Ephesians 1:14 - ARE YOU NOT YOUR OWN?

You are a purchased possession - spirit, soul and body. You don't own yourself - nobody does. If you're born-again, you belong to God. If not, you belong to Satan. It's that simple. And even though your body wasn't yet born-again the day you received Jesus as Lord, understand your body has been bought nevertheless. (1 Corinthians 6:20) As a purchased possession, never forget you are responsible to God for how you take care of it and control it while you still live on earth. Remember, your body does not want to obey God - ever. Even as we live inside our bodies every day, never forget it is still an enemy which must be controlled, subdued and kept under (1 Corinthians 9:27). You will stand before God to answer for how you took care of the body He gave you, the one you lived in. If you were to die today and stand before Jesus, could you give a good account for how you took care of His body, the physical body you're living in now?

James 4:1-8 will list the three enemies you must contend with while here on earth. First, there is the devil and his demons (James 4:7). Then there is the world system he is the author of (James 4:4, 2 Corinthians 4:4). Third, there is the body we live in, the flesh (James 4:1). Believers have more problems with their flesh than with anything else, in part because they fail to realize their body is a purchased possession that they don't own, but one which they'll have to answer for someday at the judgement seat of Christ. How are you controlling your flesh? It only wants to do three things in life: eat, sleep and sin! Are you controlling it, or is it controlling you? Eating and drinking too much? Eating and drinking the wrong things? Allowing your flesh to indulge itself with carnal, sinful appetites? Control it! Subdue it! Make it obey! Nobody else can do it for you - it's your body in stewardship, but its God's body in ownership.



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MAY 14 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Proverbs 24:10 - THE NECESSITY FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

God loves all men equally. He is no respecter of persons. He wants to use every Christian in fulfilling the Great Commission of Mark 16:15-18, but He can only use the strong ones! He can't work with the weak! Why? Because when He puts you on the front lines of world evangelism, you must be strong enough to withstand the counter-attacks of Satan. To quit when the going gets tough is to admit your level of spiritual strength is very low. Never forget this. The level of difficulty, persecution and demonic attack in your life is directly proportionate to the amount of fruitful work you're doing in fulfilling the Great Commission. The more God uses you, the more persecution and Satanic attack will come against you. The reason most believers aren't persecuted or attacked much is because they're not doing much for God. And the reason they're not doing anything is because they can't handle the heat when the battle is on! Friend, God promises you a rich, fulfilling life in service to Him, but never does He promise you a life of ease and cushy comfort. Christians owe the world! They are entitled to know what we know about salvation. Therefore, we are responsible for becoming strong in spirit, and for staying strong in spirit. No excuses! To bail out on God when the battles grow hot is to admit you're not as strong as you need to be. God has a word for you! **BE STRONG! STAY STRONG!** The world can't be reached by weak believers. Only the strong can do the job.



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 15 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

John 15:17 - THE COMMAND TO LOVE EACH OTHER

From time to time, you'll find me coming back to this issue of walking in love to fellow Christians. I feel impressed by the Holy Spirit to do that once again with you today. In today's verse, Jesus gives us a command. It's not a request or a suggestion. It's a command. What are we commanded to do? Love each other in the body of Christ. No excuses. No exceptions. No delays. Do it! That's what He's commanding you and me. That's easy to do with those who love us and treat us right. But how about the others out there, who hurt us, take advantage of us, lie about us, and basically bring misery and heartache into our lives? I've had them in my life, and I'm sure you have too! In the natural realm, I would LOVE just to ignore people like this, and wish them the worst that life has to offer! Why? Because that's my flesh talking, and if I don't take steps to love people like this BY FAITH and not feelings, I will yield to the desires of the flesh, and end up holding a grudge against this person for an extended period of time. Who will lose when I do this? ME! O yes, my flesh will feel wonderful, but the Spirit of God will be grieving in my heart. Why? Because if I yield to the temptation not to love someone who hasn't been lovely with me, I cut God off from my life and from my ministry, and I can't afford to let that happen anymore than you can my friend.

The truth is, I'm commanded to love the unlovely, and so are you. I have no recourse but to obey God, and in faith, reach out to the one who has wronged me with the love of the Lord. And you need to do the same if you're harboring any ill-will towards ANYONE in the body of Christ. Anyone for any reason. No exceptions please! You know, when you teach this way from the Bible, everybody wants to come up and give you all the SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS to the rule. Meaning to say, they want you to know that in their case, God understands and approves of them failing to walk in love to unlovely people because this is some unusual and special case that nobody else has ever had to deal with! And I'm supposed to believe that? I can't – the Bible will not allow me to. My friend, Jesus commands all of us to love everybody else in the body of Christ, unconditionally! Whether you like them or not, or whether they've been kind to you or not, or whether they've done you wrong or not, love them! Not by feelings, but by faith! Faith is not a feeling, it's a choice. Getting back to those who have done me wrong in the past – my flesh would love to hate them and exact my pound of flesh in revenge, but I can't! I simply must obey Jesus and decide to forgive them and just move on. I don't have to bring them back into my life – but I do have to release all the anger, hurt and indignation, and let God deal with them in His own way and in His own time if they fail to adjust their behavior. It protects me when I do, and that's what I have to remember because that truth will empower and strengthen me to do what I'm being commanded to do! You do the same!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 16 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Mark 13:37 - HOW ALERT ARE YOU?

The day in which we live is a perilous day indeed. That being said, I want to encourage you today to take an objective look at your life right now, and see if you're as alert as you need to be concerning your spiritual "health" and relationship with God. When Jesus gave this message more than 2,000 years ago, He was instructing His disciples (that would include you and me) to ever stay vigilant and ready, watching eagerly for His return. Well, if He told them so long ago to watch and stay alert, how much more should we be doing that today, as close as we are to His glorious return? Listen to what Jesus says: "What I say to you I SAY TO ALL, WATCH!" Those are very powerful words which should not be ignored or overlooked. So, I ask you today, are you watching? Are you spiritually alert? Are you vigilant about your state of affairs concerning your relationship with God? The importance of maintaining vigilance should be apparent to anyone reading the New Testament. In more than one passage, the Holy Spirit admonishes us to understand the diligence and persistence of our enemies. He instructs us over and over to constantly monitor our spiritual condition, and if anything BEGINS to be out of order, we're to jump on that right away and nip that thing "in the bud" as we say. Why? Because if you don't, you'll begin to DRIFT away from the Lord, and the danger there is that when you're drifting, you don't even perceive its happening to you! Hebrews 2:1 talks about giving earnest heed to the things we've learned and been assured of, so that we DON'T DRIFT AWAY! That's why you have to ever be watchful, and live each day as if it's the day Jesus comes back. Honestly, if all Christians lived each day that way, we'd see RADICAL changes in lifestyle, conversation and prioritizing among the saints! Stay alert! Stay sharp! Stay on the edge - ready to meet Jesus with a godly, holy and spiritually fruitful lifestyle. Don't be caught sleeping at your post!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 17 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

James 1:24 - FORGOT WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE?

In today's verse, we see the importance of feeding on God's Word every day. Why? Because, as it says, when you look into the perfect of law of liberty, you see what you have been made to be in Christ. But, it also says that you must CONTINUE looking into the perfect law of liberty. Looking once, twice, or even occasionally, isn't enough in these last days. You must keep going back to God's Word, to rediscover or remind yourself of what He says about you as a believer in Christ. Here are a few examples. Romans 8:37 tells us that we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS in Christ. The Bible says that GREATER is the Holy Spirit within us than the devil in the world (1 John 4:4). The Bible says we can do ALL things in Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). Those, plus many other verses reveal to the Christian who they have been made to be in Christ. Well, are you walking like the Word says you are? Are you conquering for God? Are you strong in the strength given by Jesus? Are you kicking the devil around, knowing that the Holy Spirit within you is greater than the enemy could ever hope to be? If not, why not? Could it be that you stopped LOOKING into the Bible to be reminded of what you are, and who you are in Christ?

It doesn't matter if you walked in the light of these truths last week, last month, last year, or ten years ago. What matters is NOW! Are you living and walking in the light of who you are in Christ NOW? Yesterday's victories mean NOTHING today. Just because you kicked the devil off your front doorstep yesterday, doesn't mean he won't be back today. Remember when the devil tempted Jesus? Three times the Lord rebuked the devil's temptations with God's word. And when the devil left, it says he departed FOR ONLY A SEASON (Luke 4:13). Friend, never forget that even if you defeat the devil today, he'll be back. He's always looking for another opportunity down the road whereby he could come back and regain a place in your heart and life. How do you stand guard against this? By continuously LOOKING at yourself in the mirror of God's Word, so you never forget who you are, and what you can do in Christ. Not just on Sunday mornings at church. Not just once or twice a year in someone's conference somewhere. Not just once in a while at home when you feel like it. No! You must consistently go back to the Word and let God's image of you be refreshed in your mind and heart. By doing that, you avoid the error of forgetting who you have become in Christ. You'll be able to finish running your race for God and be stronger at the end than you were when you started your race in Jesus. REMEMBER! Keep looking in the mirror. Don't forget who you are in Jesus. Let God's Word constantly remind you. Then, when the devil comes back, you can kick him up one side and down the other - again!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 18 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

James 2:7 - THE NOBLE NAME YOU HAVE TODAY

One of the greatest weapons you have at your spiritual disposal is the name of Jesus. It IS the name above every other name (Philippians 2:9). And, at that name EVERY knee must bow, and EVERY tongue must confess that Jesus is Lord. Now guess what? It's YOUR name too! God has given you that name, and as a member of the body of Christ, the name of Jesus is yours to use in spiritual combat, as often as you need it. I reminded of a story Oral Roberts told about a particular encounter he had with Jesus one time in prayer. I forget the details of the testimony, but in essence, Oral was praying about some problem he was facing in ministry, and when Jesus responded, He told Roberts to use His name more. He said, "You're not using My name enough...!" I never forgot that story because its true. Most of us don't use the name of Jesus nearly as much as we should, and the results are evident. There's more defeat, discouragement and frustration amongst us, simply because we never used the weapon of the name of Jesus as we are instructed to in God's word. How about you? Do you KNOW the power of that holy name? Are you USING that name for God's glory in your fights of faith here on earth?

The name of Jesus is for all believers to use, whenever they need to enforce the victory Jesus wrought for us thru Calvary's cross. If you study the book of Acts, you'll find the usage of the name of Jesus was evident everywhere. In fact, when the early church was being persecuted, they described it as dealing with people who were doing many things CONTRARY TO THE NAME OF JESUS (Acts 26:9). That was Paul's own description of the persecution he himself brought against the church. He was doing things against that noble name! That kind of awareness and attitude towards the name of Jesus is not very prevalent in church circles today, at least not like it was back in the early church. Well, it needs to be rediscovered in our lives and in this generation today. We have as much right to use the name of Jesus as the early church did, so what's stopping us? Ignorance! Ignorance of what that name means, and the power behind the name. Have you noticed that when unbelievers talk about religion, they very seldom use the name of Jesus in their discussions, even when they're talking about Christianity in particular. They'll talk about God endlessly, and even talk about "Christ" when talking about Christians, but they almost never use the name of Jesus. Why? Because if they're unsaved, they're controlled inwardly by the devil, and that's the name he is afraid of, and the name he hates more than any other. Christ is not the name above every name. God is not the name above every name. Jesus is! According to Philippians 2:9-10, every knee will have to bow to the name of Jesus, not the name of God or even the name of Christ! Think about that for a moment. Smart people bow NOW in this life, and the stupid and deceived ones don't. But one day they, as well as every angel in heaven, every demon and the devil himself – will bow at the mention of that wonderful name! Do you want to torment the devil mercilessly? Then use the name of Jesus against him, over and over again, concerning every situation you're facing today, or will ever face in the future. The more you apply that noble name against the devil, the more you'll be tormenting him and glorifying Jesus right in the enemy's face! Ha! Praise the Lord! I like that, how about you? My friend, you have been given a name to use that's above every other. We're part of the body of Christ, and as such, His name is as much ours as it is His. He gave it for us to use, so let's use it! There is no expiration date on His name either, so keep using it daily forever, and watch your faith declarations in His name do its work in driving the forces of darkness away from you!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 19 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

James 2:12 - THE LAW OF LIBERTY!

Remember in school, when the whole class was doing badly, the teacher would sometimes give the class an "open book" exam. Or, if not "open book", then at least the students would be told where in their textbooks the questions would come from. I can remember a few classes like that, how about you? Well, when it comes to the day of judgment, the Lord plainly tells us how we will be judged. He, in effect, is giving us an OPEN BOOK exam in preparation for our judgment, because he's telling us in advance what His criteria will be in judging the life we've lived. In today's verse, we see the two areas of human expression - saying and doing. And whatever we say or do, it will be judged by one law - THE LAW OF LIBERTY. That is the law Jesus will use to compare our lives with His Word, and the judgment will be based on that law, and that law alone. Most Christians talk and act like they're unaware of this, because if you listen to their conversation, or watch their actions, you can see they're not exercising any measure of vigilance or control in these two areas of expression. How about you?

What is the law of liberty? If you look at that statement in the context of James' letter, you can easily see that the law of liberty is the LAW OF LOVE. And, once you understand what the New Testament has to say about walking in love, you can clearly see that when walking in love, you set yourself FREE from all sin, from all fear and from anything the world may try to do to harm or hurt you. Love sets you free to obey and serve God, and at the same time, give you the ability to pay absolutely no attention to anyone else and their opinions! Wouldn't that be a wonderful way to live each day? You're at liberty when you walk in love, so when your words and actions are governed by love, you're free! Free from the reactions of the people you choose to love, and free from any persecution leveled against you for your Christian witness. Talk in love and act in love - and you're free! And that, my friend, is the criteria Jesus will use when judging your life. The law of liberty is the law of love! So, I ask you today... How free are you? The answer will depend upon the amount of divine love governing your life today....



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 20 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

James 2:19 - UNITY PRODUCES POWER!

Unity is one of the greatest weapons we have against the enemy. This is why he works so hard to constantly keep us at odds with each other in life, and within the body of Christ in particular. Strife empowers the devil in the same way faith and love empowers God. When we allow strife to enter in and gain a place in our hearts and minds, we are empowering the devil against us, and preventing God from working on our behalf. That's why this is such an important issue, and one which must never be forgotten or overlooked. Study on love, and study on strife, and you'll see how much of the Word is devoted to these topics. Love is God's way, and strife is the devil's way. God wants us walking in love towards each other, and the devil is always trying to create strife amongst us. Why? Because faith WORKS by love (Galatians 5:6). And also, they who sow strife in the body of Christ commit the sin that God hates more than any other (Proverbs 6:19). Think about that for a moment! What is the sin God hates more than any other? Adultery? No! Fornication? No! Stealing? No! Lying? No! Murder? No! All of those and many more are evil sins of course, but none of those anger God as much as the sin of spreading strife within the body of Christ! It divides us, destroys us, discourages and disorients us. We forget who we are, and what we're down here on earth to do.

On the other hand, unity produces such an atmosphere of power! This is the message of today's verse. God uses the Trinity itself to illustrate the power that can be generated when we learn to operate in love and stay out of strife. When James says that God is ONE, he's not saying there is only one person instead of three. He's saying that within the Trinity, there is such a oneness of mind, purpose and action, that no demon or devil can stand against it. That's why it says the demons TREMBLE when facing the Godhead because with such unity in operation, they know they haven't got a chance of pursuing their evil plans against God. But then, those same demons found out a long time ago that men are quite different, and easily led into strife, which to their delight, opens a continuous door of opportunity to steal, kill and destroy against us. If you're married, get into unity of purpose with your spouse. Make sure you're talking the same things, thinking the same things, planning the same things and declaring the same things in faith. As a family, the same holds true with children. In a ministry, unity is key to success. Without it, failure is inevitable. And if you don't find your place of spiritual unity, you're doomed to fail as well! Don't forget that.



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 21 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

James 3:8 - THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison! That's quite a statement, and one we would be well to never forget. No man can tame the tongue with natural techniques, because it's impossible. You can't train the tongue in the same way you train a dog, or a cat, or an animal in the zoo. No, my friend, you can only train the tongue SPIRITUALLY, using spiritual power and spiritual weapons. Left to itself, the tongue will destroy you in a New York minute. It's your enemy, and unless you renew it to God's word, it WILL bring you down, every time! You must control the tongue, or it will control you, and if it controls you, the devil is controlling you because the undisciplined tongue marches to the devil's drumbeat, and no other.

The little hole beneath your nose is the source of ALL your problems my friend. Read carefully the entire book of Proverbs, and underline or highlight any and every verse that talks about words, speaking, the mouth, etc. Then go to the book of James, and do the same, and be amazed at what God says about the importance of verbal management! The tongue is AN UNRULY EVIL without discipline! "Unruly" means it's out of control, the same way you talk about an out-of-control child as being unruly. It means there is no discipline evident, and the child, or in our case the tongue, does whatever it wants, and is always inclined to doing mischief or evil. The tongue is a part of the body, and the body is still dead-to-sin. As such, your tongue is your enemy until you discipline it with God's word. Fortunately, you can program it through meditation and training, so that it can actually become what God always intended, a powerful weapon to use to further the interests of the kingdom of God on earth. So, understand the power of the tongue, and do WHATEVER you must to gain control of that thing, for your sake, and for the sake of the kingdom of heaven!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 22 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Colossians 1:13 - YOU'RE ALREADY FREE!

One of the greatest tragedies on earth today are the multitudes of Christians who don't know they've been set free from the bondage and authority of the devil. In our verse today, we find a Holy Spirit-inspired prayer, which includes this classic statement about Christians being translated out of the kingdom of darkness, and into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Are you living and walking in light of that fact today? Have you let the devil have a place in your life, for any reason? Is there still too much of the "world" within you, where you think, talk and act more like an unbeliever than a believer? And finally, does your flesh have too much influence and sway upon you daily? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you need to take time and meditate on the fact that as far as God is concerned, YOU'RE ALREADY FREE from these enemies of yours. They have no ability against you unless you give it to them, SO STOP GIVING IT TO THEM!

First John 4:4 says that GREATER is the Holy Spirit within us than the devil out there in the world. The devil is not the greater one - God's Spirit is. That means the enemy can't just come in and do damage to you unless you give him permission. And sad to say, most believers give him all kinds of permission every day. Well, it's time to stop that, and shore up your defenses so that you actually begin to live in the light of your freedom in Christ! How foolish would you think a prisoner would be if he was given his unconditional release from prison, but refused to walk out of his cell? The cell door is open, and he's refusing to leave! How sad would that look? Well, that's what many Christians are doing daily. God has opened their prison door and given them their unconditional "release" from the bondage of sin. But, so many just go on sitting in their cell, in bondage to sin in various forms and fashions! How about you? If Jesus set you free, then you're free! Act like it. Talk like it. Think like it. And, EXPECT to walk in the light of your spiritual freedom. You're free my friend, so quit living within the prison cell of sin! CHOOSE to walk out in Jesus' Name!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 23 DAILY DEVOTIONAL John 17:13 - ARE YOU FULL OF JOY?

One of the greatest ways to live and witness for Jesus is by having His joy become the dominant force in your daily demeanor. If you look at what the Bible says about joy, you'll discover that joy and faith always go hand in hand. In other words, when you're walking by faith, your joy will be the outward sign of your inward convictions. People will know you're in faith because of the joy they see on you and in your life. And that, my friend, is what Jesus prayed for in this great intercessory prayer of John 17. He asked for His joy to be fulfilled IN US! Imagine that! The joy of the Lord Jesus constantly manifesting in us - wow! Can it be? Is it possible? Of course, it is, otherwise there would've been no point for Jesus to pray it out. If you're endeavoring to please God by faith (Hebrews 11:6), understand the part that joy will play in your walk of faith.

Read through the four gospels, and you'll see the joy of the Lord. Not just upon Him, but also, upon all those He ministered to! You see, joy is supposed to be for us, and through us for others. That's why it's one of the best witnessing tools, because it's what everybody wants. Within the heart of every human being, is a longing for God's joy. Now of course, most of the time, people look for that joy in all the wrong places, but nonetheless, that's what they're looking for. And when they find it, they know nothing can ever replace it. God's joy is something that is so wonderful it's hard to describe. Have you ever been so filled with joy you thought you were going to explode? I have, many times, and it NEVER gets old! Its new, fresh and wonderful each time I experience it! And here's the best news of all, you can experience it ANYTIME YOU WANT! How? By faith! By deciding to be joyful - not by feelings, but by faith. That's why Philippians 4:4 tells us to rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS! How can you do it always? By faith, not feelings! Move beyond your feelings and DECIDE to be joyful no matter what you're facing today. In Hebrews 13:15, the Bible talks about giving THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE. That means there are many times in life when we don't FEEL like praising God but must decide to do it anyway. This is how joy comes to us many, many times. As you decide to lift your hands and praise God, the feelings may not be there when you begin, but you'll soon see and feel the joy of the Lord start to bubble-up from down deep in your heart! Why? Because joy is a spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22) from the heart - not a feeling of the flesh. It's the best way to exhibit your faith, and the best way to share Jesus to a lost, confused and dying world all around you! Are you full of joy? If not, why not?



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 24 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Exodus 20:3,4 - IDOLS TO AVOID IN LIFE

Once while in prayer with the Lord, I was talking and praying about certain verses and certain issues pertaining to me and our ministry. Out of my spirit, I heard myself ask the Lord for help in avoiding the idols of FLESH and FINANCE. The moment I said it, I stopped and wrote that phrase down. As I've meditated on it since then, God has been showing me that there are a number of idols which Christians have allowed into their lives, and those two weren't the only ones. So, for the next few days, we're going to look at several idols which we need to see, recognize and avoid at all costs. Why? Because we're told to worship only the Lord God, and not let anything else take His place of worship in our lives. He is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5), who commands us to avoid idol worship. The trouble is, many people have the wrong idea about what idol worship really is, and you can't be free from it until you know what it is, and how it gains a place in your life.

An idol can be anything set up in your life that requires (and even demands) your time, attention, money, energies or talents. It can be something that isn't necessarily sin in and of itself, but just something that usurps God's rightful place in your life. Remember this my friend: your life is all about serving the Lord - period. He, and He alone, is to command your time, talent, energy, finances, and anything else you may possess. Many people call Jesus their Lord, but then go off and live their lives any way they want, never stopping to check things out with Jesus first. In a case like that, Jesus is NOT their Lord, they are their own lord who have been blinded by the idols they've set up in their lives. Don't let that be you! If you've allowed some idols to be set up in your life, and if you're worshipping anything other than the one, true God, you've got a responsibility to tear those idols down, and get yourself right with the Lord. I can't do that for you, you must do it for yourself. Time is short, so it's time to get started!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 25 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Galatians 1:10 - AVOID THE IDOL CALLED FAME!

Yesterday, we began to see the importance of staying free from all forms of idol worship. Many Christians who say Jesus is their Lord are self-deceived. Jesus is NOT their Lord at all, they are their own lord. How do we know that? By observing all the idols that these same people have set up in their lives. Today, we'll look at the first that the Lord showed me, and that is the idol of FAME! What does that mean? It means that for many people claiming to be Christian, the approval from others is more important than the approval from God. They're in church alright, but really, they're living for the praises of others. Peter made a classic statement along these lines when he told the Jewish leadership that **WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN!** (Acts 5:29). In other words, he was saying that God's approval was more important than their approval. Unfortunately, many believers haven't yet gotten this idol out of their lives, and therefore, they **ARE SLAVES TO THE LAST OPINION EXPRESSED ABOUT THEM.** Is that how you live your life today? Do you rise and fall on what others say or think about you? If so, FAME has become an idol you need to get rid of quick!

I've met many people, even some ministers, who absolutely live for the praises of their peers. They don't just appreciate it, they actually CRAVE it! That is an idol my friend. They've placed the accolades of men above the approval of God, and that's sin. Certainly, it's nice to gain the acceptance of others, but at what cost concerning our relationship with God? What good is having fame and notoriety with men, at the expense of losing God's approval and favor? Listen, if Jesus is pleased with how we live, move, and have our "being" on planet earth, it shouldn't matter who else likes it or not! You're not going to stand before men on judgment day, but you WILL stand before Christ's judgment seat. And this truth is what Paul was addressing when he told the Galatians in today's verse, that if he ended up living to please men, he would no longer be a servant of Christ. And that's a good question to ask yourself today. Are you living only to please men, or at least, is pleasing them **MORE IMPORTANT** to you than pleasing God? I know in my own life, I've had to kick this idol out more than once. It's a very easy idol to set up and worship, so beware and make sure it hasn't already gained a significant place in you! If Jesus says, "Well done, good and faithful servant", then that's all that matters. Never mind about pleasing other men, because you can't please them all anyway, and their opinions are always changing! One day they love you and the next day they hate you. Working to gain fame among men is a never-ending effort in futility! Just seek to serve God, and to obey Him and Him alone. Everything else is just an idol of FAME in disguise!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 26 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Proverbs 23:5 - AVOID THE IDOL CALLED FINANCES

This is the second idol Jesus showed me we must guard against at all times. But as you look around, you can easily see how many have yet to eliminate this idol from their lives. I'm so sorry to say that in my travels for the Lord since 1978, when I gave my heart and life to Him, I've met MULTITUDES of believers who are idol-worshippers to the god of money. They think about money, they work overtime to get more money, they gauge the quality of their lives by how much of it they have, and basically, they spend their entire lives in pursuit of more money, and what that money can buy for them. Let me ask you this question? What good is it if you gain the whole world, but lose your soul? What good is it if you have enough money to buy whatever you want, but fail to understand the purpose for having money from God's viewpoint? That's the question Jesus had for his followers, and that's the same question you need to ask yourself today (Matthew 16:26). Paul told Timothy that the love of money was the root cause for all sorts of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). Too bad many Christians have yet to learn this truth. God calls those who make money their god a FOOL! (Luke 12:20-21) Have you made yourself a fool before God? You especially see how this idol manifests itself in how people decide to spend the money they have. Personal example: I've met thousands of Christians who, with one check, could completely fund the construction, repair and renovation of all the buildings we've built, or need to fix and repair, in our ministry headquarters in the Philippines. Or, with one check, they could give us enough money to buy desperately needed land and ministry equipment to expand our work in the Philippines. Or, with one check, they could enable us to buy land and build hundreds of churches nationwide in the Philippines. With the amount of money they've got, it wouldn't bother them one bit. Do they give like that to help a man of God like me? No – not as far as I know. I'm sure there are some pleasant exceptions to this sad truth, but from our ministry's inception in 1980, I could say without hesitation that very few individuals or churches have ever given to us the way they really could, and in most cases when that happens, it's strictly because they're bound by the idol of FINANCE. Did you know we can be generous givers in our own minds, but be idol worshippers of money in God's eyes? It happens all the time. Many believers or churches may appear to be generous by what we see or by the limited information we have in this life - but certainly not in proportion to what they have left over! For a Biblical study on this, refer to the widow with the two mites (Mark 12:41-44). In that story, Jesus teaches that what impresses God is not the amount given, but the amount LEFT OVER afterwards. So many won't hesitate to buy themselves the latest and greatest gadget or piece of equipment, but then get as tight as can be when offering time comes around at church! They give God their left-overs or spare change - and then think they're doing God and us a favor!

Believers bound by the idol of FINANCE won't think twice about buying exotic cars, taking expensive vacations, or buying tons of "things" they don't really need, but just want. Ask them to give generously like that toward the work of God, and suddenly they get cold feet. Give them another "toy" to buy, or another trip to take, and they're gone in 60 seconds! These are idol-worshippers! For those bound by the idol of FINANCE, you see things like this manifest in their lives all the time. I feel so sorry for them, because one day they're going to have to stand before God and answer for how they spent their money. And for those who made FINANCE their idol, that will be a terrible day indeed! Are you pursuing wealth? If so, FOR WHAT REASON? There's is nothing wrong with being prosperous - the Bible plainly states that God takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servant (Psalms 35:27) - as long as you know WHY you're being prospered! Its ALL for God's work my friend. The excess we have AFTER giving abundantly to God is just the icing on our cake. So, if you're spending most of your money on you, you better get hold of yourself and kick that idol out of your life now!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 27 DAILY DEVOTIONAL 2 Timothy 3:9 - AVOID THE IDOL OF FOLLY

In this verse today, we see the third idol to avoid in your life if you're going to truly serve the Lord your God. It is the idol of FOLLY. What does that mean? The Greek word in today's verse that is translated "folly" is ANOIA. It means to exercise a LACK OF SENSE about yourself. Or for us in our study of idol-worship, it means a non-proportional willingness to risk life and limb in the name of "adventure". Now listen, I'm all for living life to the fullest, and to enjoy a thrill or two along the way. Any of you who know me know I love to ride extreme rides at the amusement park, and for me going faster is always something I love to do, whether it be on two wheels or four! However, I must always remember I have a job to do for God, and that job requires me to stay in one piece, and not risk life and limb unnecessarily in the pursuit of another thrill of some kind. For many believers, they haven't yet found that balance, so FOLLY has become an idol for them that the devil is using to distract them from the things that are truly important as far as God is concerned. Years ago, God told me not to ride in small, private airplanes unless those flights were commissioned specifically by the Holy Spirit for kingdom business. Why? Why would He tell me that? Well, I think it's because He knows my tendencies to live on the wilder side of life, and therefore, I could easily and unknowingly allow FOLLY to become an idol that ultimately leads to my premature exit from earth! My friend, there's nothing wrong with having some thrills in this life, in fact, that's part of how God put a man together in the first place. But on the other hand, if you're not careful, you'll find yourself a slave to the idol of FOLLY, and that could lead you into a situation that give the devil an opportunity to hurt or even kill you.

If you have watched our society evolve over the last 30 or 40 years, you've no doubt seen the ever-increasing tendency to glorify those who take unnecessary risks in the name of living life "on the edge". People just out there looking for the next big thrill, whatever that may be. Sometimes we call it "extreme sports". That has become an idol in the lives of too many believers, and we need to get rid of it before it drives us to a place we were never intending to go. Example: have you ever heard of men going through the "mid-life crisis"? What is that? I think It's just what we're talking about here, the idol of FOLLY. Middle-aged people trying to recapture their youth by doing things that remind them of what it was like to be young and free. Some of that is harmless, like wearing clothes designed for younger people, and things like that (even if they look ridiculous when doing so). But some of it can be dangerous, putting those who do it at risk for injury or even death. Once again, there's nothing wrong with staying young at heart, and doing as much as possible to stay physically fit and active, but not to the point where your life becomes threatened, and therefore, the lives of those who have come to depend upon you - like a spouse, children, staff members, etc. So, the next time you feel the "urge" to do something daring and wild, be sure you've gone to the Lord first, and gotten His approval on it before you do it. Don't let a lack of sense create an idol in your life that Satan can take advantage of. Keep things in perspective. Remember, if you were taken home to heaven prematurely today by way of some unnecessary stunt or thrill-pursuit, how many lives would be affected, and what impact would your death have on God's Great Commission (Mark 16:15-20)?



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 28 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Romans 7:18 - AVOID THE IDOL OF FLESH

The flesh! WhAt an enemy! It's our fourth idol to avoid if we're to be strong and stay strong in Christ. Yes, you ARE sleeping with the enemy, and he is YOU! His name is YOUR FLESH! My friend, never forget the fact that your body is not your friend - it is your deadly enemy! It will destroy you if you let it, and if possible, kill you long before your divinely-appointed time of earthly departure (also known as physical death). Your flesh wants to do three things in life; eat, sleep and sin, and not necessarily in that order! You must subdue your flesh, and keep it under submission to your spirit, because if you don't, it WILL usurp authority in your life, and make you an idol-worshipper supreme! I'm sorry to say, most believers have become idol worshippers because they are definitely ruled and dominated by the dictates of their dead-to-sin flesh. Go back and read Romans chapters 5,6 and 7. Read about Paul's own struggles with his flesh, and realize this fight is a fight we all have to fight and win in this life. Even someone like the Apostle Paul had issues with his flesh, so if he did, you and I can be sure we'll be facing the same struggles too!

Your flesh NEVER wants to serve and obey God. It can't - because its dead to sin and as such, has the nature of the devil within it. In Psalms 51:5, when David declared that in sin did his mother conceive him, what was he referring to? Her flesh. His flesh. Our flesh. It's an enemy my friend, and you must understand that. And whatever you give your flesh today, rest assured it will want more from you tomorrow. It's NEVER satisfied - ever! The only time your flesh will become satisfied is when it has killed you and taken you to hell. Don't coddle it. Don't feed it. Don't play with it. Give it NO PLACE in your life. Crush it! Subdue it! Beat it black and blue - daily! Paul said he DIED DAILY (1 Corinthians 15:31). What does that mean? It means he worked daily to keep his flesh in subjection to his spirit, making sure it never had the chance to resurrect itself and do damage against him and his call for God. Make the same decision today. Crucify your body. Nail it to the cross. Give it no quarter. Be ruthless and merciless against it. In doing so, you empower God's Spirit within to anoint you, promote you, elevate you to heights of spiritual power and potential the likes of which most believers will never know. Don't EVER let your flesh become an idol to you. If you do, you're the loser - every time!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 29 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Proverbs 23:2 - AVOID THE IDOL OF FOOD

Well, you KNEW that sooner or later we would get to this one, didn't you? This is the fifth idol to avoid to be strong and stay strong in Christ, and it's a whopper (no pun intended)! If you don't believe me, just go down to the mall, or over to Wal-Mart, and look at all the people! Some of these people haven't seen their feet in years, except in a mirror! What's wrong? FOOD has become their god - their idol. Instead of eating to live, they've reversed it and are now living to eat! We must always remember our body is not our own (1 Corinthians 6:20). It belongs to God and is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we're responsible for taking care of our body, and a large part of that deals with those two oh-so-popular words these days, DIET and EXERCISE. We'll leave off our discussion about exercise for another time, but for too many of us believers, food has taken up a far too important place in our lives. Our diet is way out of whack and must be brought back under control. It seems so many of us HAVE TO HAVE something in our mouths all day long, constantly munching and chewing like grazing cattle out on the range! This is nothing more than IDOL WORSHIP!

Why do you think the weight-loss industry is a multi-billion dollar-a-year industry? Because so many of us have allowed the idol of FOOD to take control of our lives, to the point we've given the devil a golden opportunity to wreak havoc in our lives physically. By our own choices, we've opened ourselves up to sickness, disease, and a host of other maladies directly connected to our ridiculously poor diets. If food has gained that kind of place in your life, its time to get that idol out of your life once and for all. Believers who refuse to do this will most likely die prematurely, far before their God-appointed time, and they will have no one to blame for this but themselves. Why? Because food doesn't just jump into our mouth against our will - we make choices with regards to what we eat, where we eat and how often we eat. If we get sick because our diet became a tool of the enemy to eliminate the "quality life" of health and vitality - and shorten our lives in the end - we can't blame the devil, or God. Its entirely our fault. But wait - there is good news! We have the greatest weapon known to man - free will. We can change. We can make adjustments. We can slam this door shut and keep Satan out in Jesus' name. In the same way we let food become an idol in our lives, we can cut this idol off just as quickly and as effectively. It's not just willpower that I'm talking about either. Its living with a constant awareness that our bodies belong to God, and we're making this adjustment for the purpose of being more "meet" (useable) for the Master's use (2 Timothy 2:21). I don't know about you, but that constantly fuels my determination to keep slim and trim for God's glory. Over the years, I've picked up weight when I've let my body go, so-to-speak, but I've always rallied and torn down that idol in my life. I never want food to become and idol in my life. I hope you feel that way too! If it has become an idol in your life, its time to adjust! Time to fight back! Time to reclaim your heath and quit giving the devil a place in your life. Eat to live, not the other way around!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 30 DAILY DEVOTIONAL John 14:1 - CHOOSE TO STAY CALM!

The key words in today's passage are the words "Let not..." My friend, no matter what is going on around you in life, you can choose to stay calm. You can choose to trust God. You can choose to remain faithful to God and His word. It's all about our free will, which is the greatest weapon we have from God - our ability to make choices. Jesus said that in the world tribulations would come, but that in the midst of those tests and trials, we were to CHOOSE to not let our hearts be troubled in any way. That is our responsibility today, and every day. God wants us living in His realm of Divine peace, and to do that, we're going to have to make decisions everyday which protect our heart from the snares of the enemy. Our society and culture have become so carnal and fast paced, everybody is trying to manage their "stress" on a daily basis. We have stress management classes, anger management classes, and many others courses and classes designed to help us all "cope" with the pressure of living in this day and age. Well, for us in the body of Christ, we should be enrolled in daily DIVINE PEACE MANAGEMENT CLASSES! That's what Jesus was talking about - not letting our hearts become troubled over anything. I know in my own life this has proven to be a challenge, but with God's continued help I'm working on it! How about you! Don't let the devil steal your peace. Don't let the day steal your peace. Don't let your flesh steal your peace. Don't let immature and selfish people steal your peace. Don't let slow drivers on the road steal your peace (one of my daily challenges in this arena of divine peace)! No matter who or what you're facing today that seeks to rob you of your peace, stand tall and strong in faith, and CHOOSE not to let your heart be troubled. Believe in Jesus!



MAY DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

MAY 31 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Psalms 150:6 - YOU'RE BREATHING, PRAISE THE LORD!

Of all the Psalms that reveal the heart of David, I think this one is one of the best. As much as any other Psalm, this one shows us why God called this man a man after His own heart. Basically, David is imploring his audience to praise the Lord as long as breath remains within them. What an attitude! I tell you frankly, God would be embarrassed not to show Himself strong to those with this kind of mindset. Do you have breath in your lungs today? Of course, you do. So, praise the Lord! You don't need to wait for something positive to happen, do it now! If God never gave us another gift for the rest of our lives, we've already got enough from Him to keep us busy in praise for all eternity. Start with our salvation. Then our health and healing. Follow that with the authority He gave us over the enemies of our soul. Then, praise Him for promising you prosperity for the funding of the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-18). On and on, praise Him! Praise Him for the day, praise Him for giving you a peaceful night of sleep tonight. Praise Him for the blessings you enjoy right now in your life. As you keep breathing, keep praising God!

But look around at fellow believers, and you can easily see many of them are not living a life of praise to God. We grumble, complain, murmur, gossip and mumble about so much, when we should be lifting holy hands to the Lord, praising Him for the blessings we enjoy right now in this life. I've been guilty of this too many times, and I want to do better. How about you? After all, what are we complaining about? When you look at our lives from God's viewpoint, what could we possibly be upset about while on earth? Even if we're going through trials and tribulations, praise Him anyway! Why? Because even on our worst day, we're still saved and on our way to heaven for all eternity. Do you see your life in that light? If you do, you understand the ease by which your hands go up in praise to the Lord. If you don't, its time to change your perspective, and quit looking at all you don't have. Instead, look at all you DO have! Then, lift your hands and begin praising God! If you follow me around, you'll see and hear me constantly praising God for things going on in my life, no matter what's going on - good or bad. I want to constantly cultivate this attitude of on-going praise - as long as I have breath in my lungs. The Bible says God INHABITS THE PRAISES OF HIS PEOPLE. I want God living big within my spirit - how about you? No matter what kind of hell I may be going through in life - I'm never too far away that God can't hear me! God's going to hear me praising Him no matter what! Praise Him my friend! Let EVERYTHING that has breath praise the Lord. Unless we're dead, that includes us!



MAY
DAILY
DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

