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Daily Devotions: My Chosen Servant

MAY 06TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: My Chosen Servant

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry..."(Matthew 12:18-19).

Jesus shows us by His example what a chosen and anointed servant is like.

First, He shall not strive. The word means, "to contend, to dispute; to argue with irritating persistence." This, Jesus never did; nor should we who seek to follow His way. He spoke the truth in love, and what He said stood on its own merits — needing no argument to attest to its authenticity.

Second, He shall not cry. This doesn't mean He will not shed tears, for we have read that Jesus wept. Rather, the word means, "to make a clamor; to protest insistently and noisily." You know, it's that obnoxious and dominating style of pontificating that so often shows up in public debates. In fact, the distinction between striving and crying is the one is private, and the other public.

Striving is how one individual acts when speaking to another individual, particularly if the other disagrees with what is being said. Crying is how an individual acts when speaking to a crowd; using hype and emotion, and force of opinion, as a cover for his lack of truth and substance.

Thomas Carlyle said, "In any controversy, the moment we feel anger we have already ceased striving for the truth and have begun striving for ourselves."

As you scan the broad range of voices competing for your attention, take special note of those who do not strive, nor cry. Give them a listen, and if their speech and spirit bring honor to Jesus, then heed what they say — follow where they lead. For you have come upon a chosen servant.

Finally, in the greater sense, pray that you may be such a person — someone whom God would choose to use; in whom He is well-pleased, and upon who He would put His spirit.

Someone so anchored in truth and covered with love that there is no need for striving and crying — just serving for the greater good of all who cross your path.

Wouldn't that be something?

LAST UPDATED ON MAY 06TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

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National Day of Prayer Event

National Day of Prayer Event

Written by

Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer

Dexter, Missouri – Thursday, May 2, 2013 is National Day of Prayer.

This year the Dexter Ministerial Alliance is hosting a Day of Prayer Event on the lawn in front of Dexter's City Hall, located on Stoddard Street.

The event will be at 12:15 p.m. and in case of inclement weather, the observance will be held inside the First Christian Church directly across the street from City Hall.

Everyone is invited to attend this special service and it is free to the public.

The theme for 2013 is **PRAY FOR AMERICA** and it will be the 62nd Annual National Day of Prayer in the United States.

Emphasizing the need for individuals, businesses and corporations to place their faith in God, who is sovereign over all governments, authorities and men, Matthew 12:21 was chosen as the Scripture for this year's event: "In His name the nations will put their hope."

The 2013 Honorary Chairman, Pastor Greg Laurie has written a special prayer to be simultaneously read throughout our great nation. Greg Laurie is the senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California. He began his pastoral ministry at the age of 19 by leading a Bible study of 30 people. Today, Harvest is one of the largest churches in America, and consistently ranks among the most influential churches in our nation.

Special Prayer by Pastor Greg Laurie:

"Father, we come to You to pray for our nation, the United States of America.

How You have blessed us through the years, Lord! We rightly sing, "America, America, God shed His grace on thee." Yet we see trouble in our culture today. We see the breakdown of the family, crippling addictions, and random acts of horrific violence.

Lord, we need Your help in America. In recent days, we have done our best to remove Your Word and Your counsel from our courtrooms, classrooms and culture. It seems, as President Lincoln once said, that we have “forgotten God.” But Lord, You have not forgotten us! You can bless and help and revive our country again.

Scripture tells us that “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs14:34). Lord, in Your mercy, we ask that You would exalt our country again. We have had a number of great awakenings in America. We have experienced times of refreshing, and revivals that changed not only the spiritual but also the moral landscape. As the psalmist said, “Will You not revive us again, so that Your people may rejoice in You?” (Psalm 85:6)

That is our prayer for America today, Lord. Send a mighty spiritual awakening that will turn the hearts of men and women, boys and girls back to you. You have told us if we will humble ourselves and pray, and seek Your face and turn from our wicked ways, that You will forgive our sins and heal our land. (2 Chronicles7:14)

Forgive us today, Lord, and heal this troubled land that we love so much.

We ask all of this in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Whether you can make the event or not, take time to read the prayer and if possible at noon on Thursday. There is power in prayer!

“Prayer is simply a two-way conversation between you and God” Billy Graham

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Daily Devotions: Staring At What Isn't There

APRIL 25TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: Staring At What Isn't There

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

Staring at What Isn't There

"Be anxious about nothing..." (Philippians 4:6, The Living Bible)

Philippians 4:6-7 (New King James Version)

(6) **Be anxious for nothing**, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

(7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7 (New Living Translation)

(6) Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.

(7) Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

The definition of the word nothing means "something that does not exist."

The definition of the word anxious means "to be troubled with care; to concentrate one's thoughts upon something in a fretful manner."

Could anything be more incongruous than a person focusing all their fretful thoughts upon something that doesn't even exist?

Yet people do it every day, almost all day long.

Detached from the present, their eyes somewhat glazed with vacancy, they dismiss the obvious for the oblivious — staring at something that's not even there. They are unable to appreciate what they actually do have, because they are so wrapped up with anxiety over what they do not have.

One of my favorite hymns that I learned as a boy encourages us to count our many blessings. "When upon Life's billows you are tempted, tossed; when you are discouraged thinking all is lost. Count your many blessings, name them one by one. And it will amaze you what the Lord has done!" (Justin Oatman, 1856)

It is true. A few thoughtful moments spent in thankfulness to God for the many blessings that undeniably are yours, will quell the whispering voices that beckon you to become upset by staring at nothing.

Next time anxiety begins to crowd your space, step back and start counting your many blessings — not generally, but specifically. Name them, one by one.

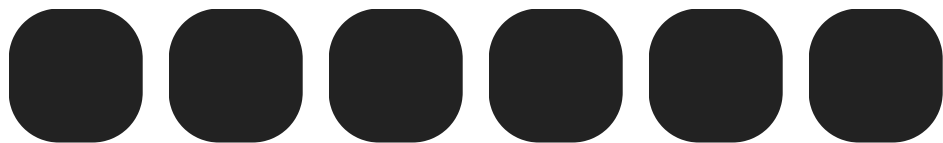
Let your mind dwell upon the massive benefits which the Lord has downloaded into your life. You'll find in no time that by looking at what is really there, your imagination will no longer drift into the darkness of what is not there.

Hey, you there! Stop staring; and start counting your many blessings!

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Pay It Forward Day!

APRIL 25TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

Pay It Forward Day!

Written by

Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer

Dexter, Missouri – Perhaps you remember seeing the movie, "Pay It Forward". It is definitely a must see movie if you haven't!

Inspired by the novel, "Pay It Forward" authored by Catherine Ryan Hyde, and the movie starring Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt and Haley Joe Osment, Mr. Blake Beattie founded the Pay It Forward Day in Australia in 2007. In 2012, fifty-two countries participated with individuals working on proclamations in 36 states and 41 cities across the United States. They expect those numbers to increase in 2013.

Today, Thursday April 25th is International Pay It Forward Day! This brilliant initiative embodies the power of giving.

It involves people doing random acts of kindness for others without expecting anything in return. Instead, recipients are instructed to "pay the kindness forward" to others in need, essentially creating a positive ripple effect of giving.

"I am overwhelmed by the support. Of course we should be paying it forward each and every day, but many of us get so caught up in the rush of every day life that we lose sight of what is most important," commented Beattie. "The Pay it Forward Day is a great reminder of the positive energy when we give to others."

"This day's concept is to help others. And instead of expecting something in return, you ask the recipients to pass the kindness on to more folks, "to pay it forward," continued Beattie.

How can you get involved? Of course, you don't need to wait until Pay It Forward Day to make a difference in someone's life! Everyday should be proclaimed Pay It Forward Day.

Here is a list of just a few ways you can participate today and make a difference in someone's life.

1. While at your favorite coffee shop on the way to work, pay for someone's cup of coffee or after work while getting your favorite soda, pay for theirs.
2. Buy treats and leave them out for your co-workers. Sometimes that surprise is all someone needs to turn a frown upside down.
3. Make a donation to your favorite charity. Or donate your time.
4. Help your neighbor out with yard work or deliver their mail to their door.
5. Sit down with your kids and write out Get Well cards to be distributed at a local hospital.
6. Sign up to be an organ donor and get on the match list.
7. Long line at the drive-thru, pick up the tab of the person behind you. That will surely make their day.

Perhaps you can get your local town or state government to proclaim a Pay It Forward Day in order to increase awareness of international Pay It Forward Day. Businesses can get involved by enabling employees to help support a "charity of choice" by offering services, encourage staff to participate internally, or have a departmental challenge whereby each department competes with each other to make a big positive contribution to the community. Schools can have fundraisers and choose a charity to give to or volunteer their time. Churches can offer a Pay It Forward Day of celebration by volunteering at a local mission or food pantry. The possibilities are endless!

</images/Pay It Forward Day 300.gif>

If every person paid it forward not one child in this world would go hungry or be without shelter. Wouldn't that be truly amazing?

"If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one." a quote by Mother Teresa.

If you would like to know more about Pay It Forward Day, there are several websites and foundations set up in the U.S. and abroad. The website www.payitforwardday.com is a wonderful place to get information and to contact people who have set up foundations.

The Pay It Forward Foundation is a registered 501©3 nonprofit corporation in the United States and was founded by the Pay It Forward author, Mrs. Catherine Ryan Hyde. This website www.payitforwardfoundation.org has wonderful information and valuable tools to help you get started.

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Daily Devotions: In Step With God

APRIL 23RD 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

[Daily Devotions: In Step With God](#)

Submitted by

Ephesians 4:1-7 NKJV

- (1) I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,
- (2) with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,
- (3) endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- (4) *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
- (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- (6) one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.
- (7) But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

People are saved when they trust Jesus Christ as Savior and choose to follow Him. Right then, most Christians realize that they will dwell with Him forever in heaven. But many don't understand what they can expect for the remainder of their lives on earth.

One benefit that's available immediately is a growing relationship with the Lord. The Father's oneness with Jesus (John 10:30) illustrates the intimacy God wants to have with His children. He had this type of closeness in mind at creation—a relationship with man is an avenue for Him to express His love and for us to worship and understand our Maker.

Another advantage is that Christ-followers are promised clear guidance through God's Holy Spirit. Decision making is a part of everyday life. It is impossible for a mere human to know every variable and nuance before choosing which path to take. But the Lord knows all things—past, present, and future. With godly wisdom available, it's hard to understand why anyone would prefer to trust his own hunches.

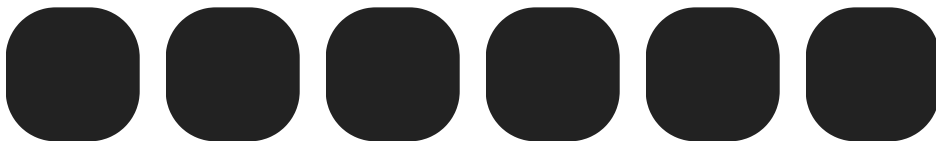
Provision is yet another blessing guaranteed for believers. There will be hard times, but God gives Christians everything necessary for following Him (Phil. 4:19). And His grace will always prove more than sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9).

How abundantly God gives to His children! One word of caution, though: these gifts are effective only when believers walk obediently with Him. Sin can stifle them.

The heavenly Father desires that all of His sons and daughters have these blessings; if you're living in obedience before Him, they are available to you. Is anything getting in the way of your total submission to Him?

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