Daily Devotion #149

**Godly Living**

**1 Peter 3:8-9 (NASB)** *“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing*.”

One of the most challenging things about living the Christian life is to be godly - to live a life that reflects the Lord Jesus Christ and our heavenly Father. Every day we face struggles and temptations and pressures that can cause us to operate in our flesh - that part of us that is sinful or that remnant that remains in us after our sins are forgiven by God and we become part of His family.

It was no different for the disciples. They struggled as much as anyone with sin. And that is exactly what the Apostle Peter is writing about when he penned this letter to the believers. They were struggling. They were struggling in ways that you and I will never see, more than likely. At least we pray that we don’t.

A big part of their struggle was spiritual. Not only were they physically being persecuted, but they were mentally and emotionally persecuted. Their lives had totally been disrupted. We know a little about that. Not that we have experienced the persecution like they did, but you and I understand disruption to our lives. COVID-19 has certainly disrupted our lives like nothing we have experienced before.

Sadly, the struggle can and often does manifest itself in a struggle with God. Often when we face difficulties our faith is weakened because we don’t understand what God is doing, or we even wonder if He is paying attention. Many people give up on God as if He is ambivalent to their struggles. The good news is that God knows our inner selves so well that He addressed the subject of struggle in life by giving encouragement and instruction to these dear saints in Peter’s day.

If we pay attention to what Peter says, by God’s leading him, he says to make sure you live in harmony with one another. God knows, when times are tough for us, it is easy to lash out at those we love. So God says not to do that. He says to live together in oneness through our struggles. He says to help each other. He says to be sympathetic. He says to remember that your brothers and sisters in the Lord are struggling as well. Don’t just think you are the only one struggling with life right now.

So here’s how to live those godly qualities: be kind to one another; do kind things for each other; speak kind words that lift each other up; live as humble people; consider your brothers and sisters as better than yourselves; don’t make all of life about you. You are not an island to yourself. God has given you people to love.

On top of those things make sure you are giving out of the kindness of your heart, even when you are frustrated with life and or each other. Don’t speak words that are hurtful or insulting, but speak words that bless others. Notice the Lord says that this is why you belong to Him. You and I were changed, beloved. When God saved us, He gave us His Spirit to help us in our struggles. Let’s not follow our flesh and its ability to destroy. Let’s follow our God, even when life is tough.

One of the great tests of our faith, to determine if we are in the faith or not, is to see how we respond in difficult times. That’s right. The struggles of this life create a fork in the road. If we follow the path of righteousness, we pass the test. If we resort back to our old ways of thinking and behaving, we fail. Not that God kicks us out of His family, He certainly does not. (John 10:28) But He certainly exposes our sinfulness and points out areas where repentance needs to occur.

Praise His Name because we are still loved. We are still cared for. Because God is the One who exemplifies these qualities. Let’s focus on being like Him, even when life is hard. Our joy will grow each moment as we follow His example.