

DAILY MEDITATIONS
MONTH OF JULY 2010



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July 1

A Weaned Child

“...like a weaned child is my soul within me.”

Psalm 131:2

The problem with many of us is that we have grown old without growing up! We still need to be weaned. The weaning process is important. God’s goal for your life is maturity and His method for maturity is weaning. He has to wean us away from things we think are important.

God has to wean us away from the things of the world, from the cheap toys that we hold on to. He wants to give us the best, and His desire in weaning is our submission.

Read Psalm 131. The weaned child of Psalm 131 was not losing, but gaining. He was moving out into a larger life. Likewise, God has to take things away from our lives, not because they are bad, but because they are keeping us from the best.

The next time you whimper and cry because God takes something away from you, remember He might be weaning you! He might be saying, “Get closer to me. Step out into a life of maturity and let’s go together.”

July 2

Cast Away Your Cares

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”
I Peter 5:7

God is not only interested in the big things that concern you—He is interested in the little things too. Sometimes, we think, “This problem is too small to bother God with.” But, God really is interested in all that troubles us.

He is paying attention! The Bible says that He knows about the little sparrow that falls to the ground (Matthew 10:29). He knows how many hairs we have (or don't have) on our heads. God knows every tear you shed. God knows what is troubling you right now.

He is praying for you! Many times when we are going through times of trial or times of hardship, we can not see God. But God sees us. Proverbs 15:3 reminds us, “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”

He is planning for you! You may be at your wit's end. You cannot think or act because you are replaced and overwhelmed by your own problems. But he is working out the details of your deliverance!

July 3

Silence the Devil

“When he [the Counselor] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”

John 16:8

The Holy Spirit exposes the true nature 1) of sin as refusal to have faith in Christ, 2) of righteousness as defined by Christ’s cross, and 3) of judgment as God’s judgment of satan through Christ’s death on the cross.

The devil condemns you of sin.

The Holy Spirit convicts you of sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ cleanses you of sin.

Do you know the difference? The devil accuses you to drive you from Christ. The Holy Spirit convicts you to draw you to Christ!

The devil wants you to get under a load of guilt, so you’ll say, “I’m no good. I can’t live the Christian life. There’s something wrong with me. God doesn’t hear my prayers.” When you believe those lies, you let the devil drive you away from God!

The Holy Spirit convicts you to reclaim you! He is trying to correct you and bring you back, that you may know the fullness of joy. The Holy Spirit draws you to Christ that you may confess your sins and be cleansed! “...There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1)

July 4

The Sovereign Power of God's Love

“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Romans 8:31

The newspaper reminds us of the uncertainty of life. Things happen that are unexpected, tides, turn, fortunes shift, lives end. One of the basic needs of humans is a sense of security! Yet, the events of the day remind us of the insecurity that comes from the uncertainties of life. We just don't know what's next.

Read Romans 8:31-36. Here we find simple, but strong reasons to feel secure. We are secure knowing that:

- o His purpose will not be frustrated. Since God is for us, none can be against us (v. 31)
 - o His generosity will not be quenched. Since He has not spared His Son, God will withhold nothing in taking care of us (v. 32)
 - o His forgiveness will not be cancelled. No prosecution can succeed since God our judge has already justified us (v. 33-34)
- His love will not be served. God has revealed it in Christ, and nothing will separate us from Christ's love (v. 35-36)

None of these nor all of them heaped together can budge the fact that you are:

Dearly loved,,

Definitely forgiven, and

Divinely secure in the Lord Jesus Christ

We are secure in the Sovereign!

July 5

What Can I Do?

“I spread out my hands to you.”

Psalm 143:6

No one likes to feel helpless. Almost any situation seems bearable if there is only something, anything, that we can do that might improve it. Despair and depression usually flood in only when we realize that we are helpless, unable to affect our situation.

David may have felt this way when he penned Psalm 143. He cried out to God for mercy and relief. David realized, as we should, that he had no right to expect God’s help (v. 2). Yet his desperate situation filled him with dismay.

Reflecting on God’s revelation of Himself in past deeds, David reached out to find God again. He seemed to cry out, “What can I do?” The answer is simple and clear, “Show me the way to go and teach me to do Your will.” We may be helpless to better our situations. But there is still something we can do!

Each day, each hour, as we wait for God to deliver us, we can concentrate our attention on doing God’s will for that day, for that hour. What a sense of relief comes over us as we make David’s discovery. We are not helpless after all. There is something we can do—the most important thing of all. We can do God’s will.

July 6

From Prison to Portion

“Set me free from my prison.”

Psalm 142:7

The setting is the cave in which David hid from Saul’s pursuing army. Troubled and discouraged, David cried out to God for rescue. We learn, like David, that we can “pour out our complaints” to the Lord. We can tell Him every trouble, share every dark and distressed emotion.

Our prisons may be literal, economic, or a depressive state of mind in which it seems that everyone is against us and no one cares. If that is what we face or feel, we need to see that the psalmist did not stay in “prison.” He reached a point where he was able to declare, “You are... my portion.” (v. 5)

How does the psalmist move from “prison” to “portion?” Through prayer! If we read Psalm 142 in three sections (v 1-3a, v 3b-5, and 6-7), we will notice that each section begins with a description of the psalmist’s plight and ends with an expression of confidence!

This is surely what it means to wrestle in prayer. Pouring out complaint gives way to the realization that God knows my way. The feeling that no one cares gives way to the conviction that God is both refuge and portion!

July 7

We Live by Revelation

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.”

Proverbs 29:18

The world sees grand and noble purposes and goals to achieve. People dream up the greatest and most satisfying things in which they can invest their lives. Institutions establish goals and objectives then organize themselves to achieve them.

God’s people function in a radically different way. Christians arrange their lives based on the revelation of God, regardless of whether it makes sense to them. What God wants is to get the attention of His people and reveal to us what is ‘on His heart’ and what is ‘His will,’ for God’s ways are not our ways.

The absence of God’s revelation leads to the loss of controls and disciplined living. Whenever people do not base their lives on God’s revelation, they ‘cast off restraint.’ That is, they do what is right in their own eyes. The only way for you to know God’s will is for Him to reveal it to you. When you hear from the Father, you have an immediate agenda for your life—obedience. “Blessed is he who keeps the law.”

July 8

Warfare...or Discipline?

“Because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son.”

Hebrews 12:6

There is a tendency among Christians to view anything unpleasant that happens to them as the result of ‘spiritual warfare.’ The problem is that their predicament may have nothing to do with satan or with spiritual warfare. It may appear more glorious to explain our hardships as satan’s determined attacks, rather than admitting that we are being disciplined by our heavenly Father.

As a Father who is both righteous and loving, God disciplines His children. God disciplines us in order to gain our attention and bring necessary changes to our lives. His discipline is not a venting of wrath. It is part of the necessary process of bringing us to responsible maturity. God’s discipline will never help you if you dismiss it as satan’s doing or spiritual warfare. If you misunderstand God’s chastening, you may actually blame Him for not answering your prayers. It is a sign of God’s love and care, leading us to Him and away from the final judgment.

July 9

Your Servant Is Listening

“The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”

I Samuel 3:10

For the day’s devotion, read I Samuel 3:1-10. God uses a variety of methods to get our attention—if we are not willing to focus on Him. Sometimes He gives us a word from a believer or an unanswered prayer. Sometimes He allows a tragedy, a restless spirit, a disappointment, a crisis and other difficulties.

Whatever method God chooses to bring you within His will, it will be perfect and born of His love. He has plans for you and will keep you. It is when we cease traveling on the path He has chosen for us that God has to get our attention.

He may use one method today and another next week. Yet, He always acts out of love. He sees not only your present but also your future.

Our response should be to examine every area and circumstance of our lives. We should also ask God to clarify what He is trying to show us and how He wants us to proceed. God got Samuel’s attention! He told God that he was ‘listening.’

July 10

Security Blanket

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

I John 4:18

Are you gripped with fear about something? Love is the answer to overcoming your fear! Because love is the Christian’s security blanket!

When you were a child, did you have a teddy bear or a blanket that gave you sense of security, something you wanted to hold close to you and get wrapped up in?

The Holy Spirit is the believer’s warm, loving security blanket. ‘Perfect love cast out fear.’ The translation in the Living Bible says, “We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly.” God’s perfect love can eliminate all dread.

The question isn’t, “Am I brave enough?” The question is, “Do I trust His love enough?”

July 11

Be Patient In Your Faith

“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.”

Hebrews 10:36

At once...

Now...

Immediately...

These are words that come to mind regarding the fast-paced lifestyle many of us find ourselves in. We expect our newspaper to be on the porch when we wake up. We expect traffic signals to turn green the instant we approach them.

But what happens when our desires don't materialize in what we consider to be a timely fashion? We may experience frustration, grumpiness, possibly even anger. As one of the fruits of the Spirit, patience is a character trait God desires to produce in us.

Yet the only way to really learn what it means to be patient is to experience it firsthand. Our response when something doesn't happen on schedule speaks to how well we have learned to be patient. Maybe God has something better just around the corner. He will let you know when He is ready! Or perhaps, when you are ready!

July 12

Trust and Do

“Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.”

Psalm 37:3

Trust and do are words which go well together, in the order in which the Holy Spirit has placed them. We should have faith, and that faith should work.

Trust in God sets us upon holy doing—we trust God for good, and then we do good. We do not sit still because we trust, but we arouse ourselves and expect the Lord to work through us and by us. It is not ours to worry and do evil but to trust and do good. We neither trust without doing nor do we without trusting.

Adversaries would root us out if they could, but by trusting and doing, we dwell in the land. We will not go into Egypt, but we will remain in Immanuel’s land—the providence of God, the Canaan of covenant love. As sure as God is true, His people shall be fed.

July 13

Minimum Daily Requirements

“Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.”

Psalm 105:4

Nutritionists remind us that we must have the minimum daily requirements of vitamins and minerals if we are to be physically healthy. Similarly, David gives God’s MDR’ we need if we are to be spiritually healthy in Psalm 105:1-4.

Praise!

Praise means giving thanks for all God is, all that He does, and all that He shares with us. Praise is rejoicing in the presence of the Lord.

Prayer!

We call upon the Lord when we need strength and grace and help in a time of need and He always hears us.

Presentation!

If we only praise and pray but don’t present the Lord to other people, our lives will become narrow, shallow, and selfish.

Practice!

Practice the presence of God and live in the light of God’s countenance. Live with the smile of God upon your life and seek to please Him alone.

Just as your physical health requires care, so does your spiritual health. Are you taking proper care of your soul?

July 14

He Will See You Through

“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.”

Psalm 130:1

The next time you feel at rock bottom, read Psalm 130. Three basic requests in this psalm echo the concerns in our hearts today.

First, the psalmist asks God to hear him (v. 1). Why? Because I can't swim. I am in the deep drowning, and I'm afraid I can't make it. No matter how far down you may go or feel, God always hears you.

Then he asks God to hold him (v. 3,4). We cannot stand before God in the courtroom of His justice—we are helpless. Only Jesus Christ, the Perfect One, can stand there. But he stands with us as our Savior. God not only hears us when we are down, but He holds us.

Next, he asks God to help him (v. 4-7). We are sometimes like soldiers in the watchtower, waiting for the light. We can't see, but God can see, and there is a future hope for His people. Place your confidence in the promises of God's Word. No matter how down you may feel, God hears you, holds you, and helps you turn to Him—He will see you through.

July 15

Be Firm In Your Faith

“It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise...but through the righteousness that comes by faith.”

Romans 4:13

A faith line is what you need when you want God to do the “impossible” in your life. Abraham had natural facts to deal with just like we do. Read Romans 4:13-21. He knew there was no natural way for God’s promise to him to come true. Yet, Abraham ignored the natural evidence around him and believed only God’s promise. He made an irreversible decision to go with the Word of God.

And if you and I are ever going to see God do the impossible in our lives, we are going to have to do the same thing!

How do you draw that faith line? Begin with the Word. Search the promises of God and believe what He has said, and is saying, about your need. Meditate on those promises until faith rises and sets in your heart.

Then draw the line of faith. Draw it in your mind and heart. Draw it across the floor in your prayer room. From that moment on, speak only as if your miracle has already happened.

July 16

Turn the Tables

“We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

Numbers 13:33

How does the devil see you? Does he see you as a terrifying and mighty warrior of God? Or does he see you as a wimp he can whip in a minute? The answer to that question depends on you!

The key to the Israelites failure to enter the Promised Land is found in the words of our focus Scripture. The reason they were so terrified to fight the giants in Canaan wasn't because those giants were so big. It was because the Israelites saw themselves as so small. It was what they were in their own sight that defeated them.

The same thing is true for you as a believer. It is what you are in your own sight that will make the difference. If, in your own sight, you're a weak, powerless Christian, the devil will run over you all day long.

But, when you begin to see yourself as God sees you, as a conquering son or daughter of the Almighty God equipped with the very power of God Himself, the devil will want to steer clear. If you are not strong in the Lord in your own sight, you need to change that. You need to get so full of God's Word and so full of the Holy Spirit that you walk around like a spiritual giant. Turn the tables on the devil!

July 17

Keep No Record

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”

I Corinthians 13:4-5

Walking in love is good for you health. It's true! Medical science has proven it. Researchers have discovered that hostility produces stress that causes ulcers, tension, headaches, and a host of other ills.

Just think of how much stress you could avoid by being quick to forgive, by living your life according to these verses. So, keep no record of wrongs! Imagine the physical and emotional benefits of living like that. If you find yourself habitually bound by hostility, yield to that love—it will set you free.

Remember when Jesus called Lazarus forth from the grave? He was alive but still bound in the grave clothes. Jesus commanded the bindings to be loosed so Lazarus could be free to walk.

Jesus wants that same kind of freedom for you. So get into agreement with Him. It doesn't take a medical miracle to turn your life around. All it takes is your decision to yield to the force of love.

July 18

Just a Prayer Away

“...I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.”

Isaiah 45:2-3

Maybe you feel like you are in a prison of sorts today with every door shut in your face. Maybe you are in a prison of despair and doubt. Perhaps you just got back to the doctor and received a bad report, or are dreading a visit this week. Maybe you are in a financial prison of debt and loss. Maybe you are in a domestic prison of abuse and you feel there is no way out. Maybe you are in a prison of addiction, defiling habits, or demonic activities.

There is a way out for you. God is still on His throne. He hears and answers our prayer. **Victory over your situation is just a prayer away!** The circumstances may or may not change, but our perspective and attitude will change as you begin to pray and praise God. You and I don't have a need that God cannot meet.

July 19

Blameless

“In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.”

Job 1:1

There is a tremendous sense of freedom in living a blameless life. Job was blameless. Even though the most rigorous tests, Job remained above reproach.

Blameless does not mean perfect. It means that in every situation you do the correct thing. If you sin against someone, you confess your sin and ask for forgiveness. If you sin against God, you repent and begin to obey Him. When you become aware of your transgression, seek to be blameless in the way you deal with it.

Have you been blameless in your dealings with God and others? If you are blameless, you must do everything in your power to correct any wrongdoing and reconcile any broken relationship. There is a profound sense of peace for the one whose way is blameless!

July 20

Where Cash Counts

“They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed.”

Amos 2:6b-7

Prosperity tends to drain the vitality of any people. Why? Because with prosperity comes a subtle change in the values held by citizens of a nation. This was the message of Amos to his contemporaries. Your values are turned upside down. Those distorted values doom you to judgment.

Materialism replaces humanitarianism. Selfishness shoves mortality aside. And secular religion replaces the revealed faith. In Amos' Israel, cash counted with the rich, while poor people did not. A love for things replaces a love for people as the motivating drive in a person's life. The drive to experience selfish pleasures stretches beyond the lowest bounds of mortality. The people were religious, but practiced a religion of ritual with out reality.

The point of Amos' sermon is simple. We need to check our relationship to God by checking our values. Is profit more important to us than people? Are the standards we live by those of our society, or of our God? Is our faith a matter of Sunday attendance, or that plus week-long commitment to doing God's will?

July 21

Pointing the Finger

“From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great.”

Ezra 9:7

For today’s devotional, read Ezra 9:1-10:4. It is tempting, when someone we know sins, to come down hard on him. After all, we’re to discipline erring brothers, aren’t we?

Yet Ezra reminds us that it’s not appropriate to point the finger of judgment. What is appropriate when others sin is tears. Not tears for them. Tears that *we* have let God down. Tears that *we*, the people of God, have failed. Ezra identified himself with the sinners and confessed to the Lord. Rather than stand self-righteously in judgment, Ezra cried, “Not one of us can stand in Your presence.” (v. 15) He was deeply hurt by the sins of his people—hurt for them, and for God.

So next time you or I see sin in the body of Christ, let’s not point the finger. Let’s realize that if the church was what God called it to be, and if we were the Christians God called us to be, our brother or sister might not have fallen. We need to let our hearts be broken, that through confession of our responsibility for one another God might purge the church as He did Judah in Ezra’s time.

July 22

Believing God's Love

“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love, whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”

I John 4:16

The greatest truth in all of Scripture is this—God is love. Understanding this in its full dimensions will set you free to enjoy all that is yours as a child of God. But you must accept that God loves you. God loves you and me, not because we deserve His love, but because His nature is love. His love for us gives us an inherent worth that nothing can diminish.

If you cannot accept the truth that God loves you, you will be limited in how you can relate to Him. When He disciplines you, you will not take it as an expression of His love. Rather, you may resent Him. If you will accept God's love however, you will be able to return love to God as well as to others.

Are you experiencing the profound sense of joy and security that comes from knowing you are dearly loved by God? Being assured of God's love for you sets you free to enjoy the numerous expressions of love He showers upon you each day.

July 23

Weak With Those Who Are Weak

“Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?”

II Corinthians 11:29

We do not live in isolation. When a brother or sister suffers, we are affected. Our calling is not to be solitary Christians, but to be members of a priesthood (I Peter 2:9).

It was impossible for Paul to remain unmoved while there were believers in Corinth who were spiritually weak. Paul told the church members to rejoice when church members rejoice and to weep when a fellow member weeps. We depend on one another, and this influences everything we do.

It is possible to become so preoccupied with our own spiritual journey that we do not get involved in our church. You can become so focused on what God is doing in your own world that you are oblivious to the suffering and persecution that your fellow Christians face. If other believers around you are rejoicing or hurting, and you are unaffected, you have become desensitized to the people of God.

July 24

He Keeps The Key

“Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.”

Acts 16:6

When they would turn to the left, to Asia, He stayed them. When they sought to turn to the right, to Bithynia, again the Holy Spirit stayed them. The time was not yet ripe for the attack on these bastions of evil.

Whenever you are doubtful as to your course, submit your judgment absolutely to the Spirit of God, and ask Him to shut against you every door but the right one.

In the meanwhile, continue along the path which you have been already traveling. Abide in the calling in which you are called, unless you are clearly told to do something else.

The Spirit of Jesus waits to be to you what He was to Paul. Do not be surprised if the answer comes in closed doors. But when doors are shut right and left, an open road is sure to lead to Troas. Their faithful friends await and visions point the way to vast opportunities. God knows and He keeps the key!

July 25

No Hopeless Cases

“Your daughter is dead,’ he said. ‘Don’t bother the teacher any more.’”

Luke 8:49

Read Luke 8:26-56. These verses show how Jesus dealt with what must be considered “hopeless cases.” The demon-possessed man had been chained “many times,” but had always broken loose (v 29). The woman who touched Jesus had been “subject to bleeding” for a dozen years, and “no one could heal her” (v. 43). And the daughter of Jairus was dead. All hope was gone, and friends advised, “Don’t bother the Teacher any more” (v 49). Yet, Jesus cast out the demon, restored the health of the woman, and raised the little girl from the dead.

Strung together, as these stories are by Luke, they remind us of a wonderful truth. There are no “hopeless cases” with the Lord. And there are no “hopeless people” either. The power of Jesus is great enough to meet ever need, and to transform any sinner as well.

July 26

Careless Words

“But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”

Matthew 12:36

The Pharisees just didn't realize what they were saying until it was too late. They figured they had Jesus dead to rights when they criticized His disciples for picking wheat on the Sabbath.

Then, oops! They realized all they had done was expose their own failure to understand God's Word and their own cold hearts. Actually, each person's heart can be read in his or her actions and words. Those things we say without thinking reveal the heart.

What people say coming out of church or in public does not always reveal their hearts. It is the words that slip out when they speak casually to their family, co-workers, or friends.

It is good every now and then to check on our own careless words. When we do, we will be able to tell a lot about the quality of our personal relationship with Christ.

July 27

Make Yourself Nothing

“...But made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness.”

Philippians 2:7

The affirmation of Paul, in this hymn of Christ as God incarnate, is thought to be one of the church’s earliest confessional statements. It portrays Christ as “in very nature of God,” by emptying Himself to take on human nature and suffer a shameful death. We are to look at the attitude of humility Jesus displayed, and adopt it in our relationships with others.

The arrogant of this world look down on people who talk more about love than success, and who seem to prize humility more than headlines. What the world does not understand is that Christians choose humility not out of weakness, but out of strength. Humility must be our response to the fact that Jesus was will to abandon His rightful claim of full equality with God to die on a cross. Only when our pride has been put to death will we begin to care for others as Christ cared for us.

July 28

God Doesn't Lie

“When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, ‘I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.’”

Hebrews 6:13-14

I like the familiar saying, “God said it. I believe it. That settles it.” Of course, for some people, that doesn't settle it. That was the problem with some of the people the letter of Hebrews was addressed to. God promised—God swore He'd keep His promise—that settles it for sure.

It's not just that God, who doesn't lie, has promised to bless us. God sealed His promise with an oath, executed in the blood of His one and only Son. Why did God take such pains to confirm His promise? Because he knew how vulnerable we are to fear and doubt. He knew how weak our faith becomes sometimes. And so, not because he needed to, but as an anchor for the hope we have in Christ, God promised, and He swore His oath to reassure us.

What a gracious God we have. And how little cause we have to doubt Him. In Jesus we have “an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”

July 29

We Share

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering as though something strange were happening to you.”

I Peter 4:12

Remember the story of the little red hen? She wanted to bake bread, but none of the barnyard animals would help. So she did it herself. Of course, when the bread was baked, they all gathered around wanting a piece. But the little red hen ate it all herself. This children’s story is a commentary on human rather than animal nature. We are not enthusiastic about the work, but we sure like to reap the benefits!

We tend to look forward to heaven, and plan to enjoy eternity there. But we are not too wild about experiencing any suffering down here. Yet Peter reminds us that suffering and glory are bound together inseparably. Jesus’ commitment to do God’s will brought Him into conflict with this world. If we share that commitment, we will come into conflict with the world and suffer too. Bearing Christ’s name may mean carrying his cross.

July 30

My Treasured Possession

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.”

Exodus 19:5

The people of Israel were ungrateful. They were rebellious. They were mean-spirited and hostile. They were selfish and petty. Yet, God delivered this people from Egypt and “brought you to myself” (v 4). God even says that He chose this people, “out of all nations,” to be His treasured possession.

Read verses 3-6. They remind us of wonderful things about our God. Like the diamond miner who picks up a rough and dull stone and shouts with delight, God delights in unlovely people. He knows what precious gems, through His shaping and polishing sinners can become.

It is hard for you and I to have this delight in unlovely people. We see only the rough spots, the dull and lifeless form. What we need to do is ask God to share His perspective with us. We need to see in the least lovely, someone who can be God’s own treasured possession. Someone who can join God’s kingdom of priests and become a holy citizen of the holy nation He intends to create.

July 31

Communicating God's Love

“Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Deuteronomy 6:7

Loving God is so important. Surely love for the Lord is the most important heritage we can pass on to our children. Moses says that communicating faith begins with a parent's own love for God. It is only when God has written His laws on our hearts and they find expression in our lives that we are able to “impress” them on our children.

When God's love has made us sensitive to His commandment, so that He and they become such an integral part of our lives that we “talk about them when we sit at home and when we walk along the road, when we lie down, and when we get up.” Then the God who is real to us will be real to our children too. Then our own love for God will find a home in the hearts of our boys and girls.