

Daily Family Devotions

The thought begins in the Bible verse;
please take the time to read it first.

FRIDAY

“THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF NEW LIFE”

SCRIPTURE:
Colossians 3:7-10

When does the Christian realize he has come into a new life?

Some men know it immediately, and their amazement and delight is an immediate reflection of their experience. Others seem to go into it more easily, and only gradually become aware that they are “flying” where before they crept, that they see things they never noticed, that their perspective is greater and deeper — that all of life has become more meaningful, and rich and lovelier.

Some people have grown into this kind of life as children, and are so accustomed to seeing life through spiritual eyes, through love and understanding that they can scarcely remember life without God . . .

Nevertheless, once a man is truly “born again” he will know it by many things . . . by his assurance of God — by his satisfaction in and hunger for prayer, by his understanding of Jesus Christ’s life, and by his compassion for a world still “unborn,” and as yet dead to God’s great gift.

Prayer: Lord God, please show me how I may help others emerge into this wonderful new life. Make me watchful for those struggling to be born, and give me wisdom and love through Thy Son our Lord, I pray. AMEN

SATURDAY

AN EVENING PRAYER

SCRIPTURE:
Psalm 25

If I have wounded any soul today,
If I have caused one foot to go astray,
If I have walked in my own willful way,
Dear Lord . . . forgive.

If I have uttered idle words or vain,
If I have turned away from want or pain,
Lest I offend some other through the strain,
Dear Lord . . . forgive.

If I have been perverse, or hard, or cold, If I
have longed for shelter in the fold
When Thou hast given me some fort to hold,
Dear Lord . . . forgive.

Forgive the sins I have confessed to Thee;
Forgive the secret sins I do not see;
O guide me, love me, and my keeper be.
Dear Lord, I pray. Amen.

C. M. B.

Prayer: Lord, so often I live my day in ragged disregard for others, in indifference to Thy will or those hours. And when the evening comes, I am left with no inner feeling of fulfillment — for only as I empty myself for Thee, is there room for You to come in. Teach me the miracle of this outflowing life that I may live each day as an instrument of Thine, fully used, fully dedicated to my Lord, for to this purpose I was born. AMEN

MONDAY, MAY 3, 2021

“AS A BUTTERFLY IS BORN”

SCRIPTURE:
John 3:1-8; Genesis 1:24-27

The Greeks used the butterfly as the symbol of Christian life. To them the butterfly symbolized the birth of the new out of the old, the consummation of a creation, the finished product.

Every stage of the caterpillar is a step toward this final, beautiful creature; and there is nothing more disappointing to a child than a chrysalis which fails to produce a butterfly and instead remains a useless, dead shell.

And there is nothing more tragic than human life which never gives birth to its spiritual counterpart — never emerges from its purely physical, grubbing existence out into the highest form of living for which God fashioned it — the beautiful, soaring life which in all things glorifies its Lord and lends a special beauty to the world.

In every man is this potential for becoming a “finished” product, which Christ calls “being born again;” for man was not created to exist merely as a human “grub,” wholly occupied with earning, eating, surviving. God created us to glorify Him, to live effortlessly on the currents of His will and to beautify life through this incredible spirit — this consummation of the highest form of living. How far we have wandered from this marvelous rebirth He intended for us to experience!

Prayer: Lord, I thank Thee for creating in me a spirit, ready to be born to full flight in spiritual things, a spirit that can communicate with You and respond to You. Help it to come alive. Lord, I pray. AMEN

TUESDAY

“THE SPIRITUAL FLIGHT”

SCRIPTURE:

John 3:3; Romans 8:6-8, 13

“Why should I be ‘born again’? I am as alive as I need to be here on this earth?”

In the 3rd verse, Christ says to Nicodemus, “Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God — ” and He made it sound like a warning, as though the Kingdom of God should be man’s highest destination.

And for a Christian it should be. Since God is a Spirit, we must communicate with Him through our spirits and just as a butterfly needs wings to soar up into the heavens, so man needs his spirit to lift him up to those “heights” where we are finally in God’s presence.

We know we cannot touch God, see Him with our physical eyes or hear Him with our ears — yet we know, too, that prayer is as real a conversation as our lips perform and that there is within each of us that desire to reach Him, to be with Him — to know the freedom and re- lease we search for.

But men forget that there is this new dimension in living . . . and they do not understand what it is Christ is saying when He tells us, “Ye *must* be born again.”

Prayer: Lord, help me to be free of the bonds and pressure of merely being alive to make a living, or of believing that this physical life is all that You have provided for us . . . Grant that I may experience the wonderful freedom with You that has been prepared for me. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

“HOW DOES ‘REBIRTH’ BEGIN?”

SCRIPTURE:

I Timothy 4:6, 7, 8; II Corinthians 5:17

Let us look at the efforts of the caterpillar toward its goal of becoming a butterfly . . .

There is no indecision, no disobedience to the natural order of instinct. It eats what it should; then it searches for a place to securely attach itself while it begins that miraculous trans- formation into a butterfly chrysalis.

One of the most powerful forces in nature is obedience to the natural law or instinct. Only man has the ability, audacity — and stupidity to disobey God’s divine plan for him . . . Thus we see that man in his journey toward “completion” does not always follow his inner, spiritual instinct to prepare himself for a “new life.” We watch man as he refuses to take the nourishment of God’s Word; see him shun the security of solid precepts; and watch him then spin himself into a chrysalis of indifference from which he will never emerge . . .

Through disobedience he has defeated the greatest experience of his life, and through failing to prepare for that life, he will never realize it.

Prayer: God, if You have put into the nature of Your smallest creatures the ability to achieve so beautiful a life, how much more You must have put into the heart of man the instinct to prepare for and find the marvelous, new life You have prepared for him. Your love for men is so deep, and we thank You for making it possible for us to be more and more like You — in Your image, in Your heaven. AMEN

THURSDAY

“THE STRUGGLE TO FREEDOM”

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 10:8-10

A science book describes the moment of the butterfly’s “birth” as a most precarious moment of all, as it struggles to free its wings for flying.

Often the “spiritual birth” you experience will be a struggle; the very word “birth” denotes struggle. Yet too frequently we think of “re- birth” as being a heady emotional fling, or something that comes suddenly out of nowhere. But birth of any kind comes only after a period of development and growing, and so the new life of a Christian, too, comes only after a period of development and growth. Sometimes it is an effortless birth, and sometimes we struggle with the final phases of belief and trust.

The man who has been obedient to God’s law of nourishing the spirit, and as he has become aware of the growing new life within him has attached himself to other believers, to a church where the waiting, vulnerable life can be protected and allowed to develop, will have the vitality and strength for this final thrust into freedom and God’s dominion. This is the life He will bless, and which will move strongly and surely into the heights prepared for it. This is the completed man Christ was urging His disciples to become.

Prayer: Lord, help my struggles always to be directed toward You, never away from You, so that I may be all You want me to be — the completed person You desire. AMEN