

Daily Reflection on Scripture
Week of January 28
Lies We've Been Told About God:
God Punishes Me When I Mess Up



Most loving, gracious, and compassionate God, I thank you for accepting and loving me without conditions. I thank you for coming alongside me when I feel down and out or when I feel that I have messed up and made you upset at me. Help me to know today, tomorrow and all the rest of my days that there is nothing that can ever separate You from me. Help me to be loving, gracious and compassionate with myself. May I never allow anything to separate me from You. In the name of Jesus who came into this world with open hands to love and embrace us all, I pray. Amen.

Sunday January 28

John 3:17 God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.

Sacred Pause: God is on your side. God doesn't point an accusing finger; instead God reaches out a loving hand to help you up when you fall. God is all about helping you.

Monday January 29

Isaiah 41:10 Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you.

Sacred Pause: There's no need to fear God. God is love and God's love cast out fear. God does not punish or reject you. The love of God is holding you right now, right here.

Tuesday January 30

II Corinthians 1:3-5 All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah! Father of all mercy! God of all healing counsel! God comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, God brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us.

Sacred Pause Often, God comes to you in hard times through others who have been through what you are going through. They are God's compassion with skin on for you.

Wednesday January 31

John 9:1-3 Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?" Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do.

Sacred Pause: Does God punish me for the times I mess up? "You're asking the wrong question" Jesus said. Instead look for the ways that God is helping you through the mess.

Thursday February 1

Romans 5:3-5 We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the

tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit.

Sacred Pause: Your troubles are not caused by God, for God wants to help you to grow through them. They can keep you alert to what God's grace is doing next in your life.

Friday February 2

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong! Be fearless! Don't be afraid and don't be scared by your enemies, because the LORD your God is the one who marches with you. He won't let you down, and he won't abandon you.

Sacred Pause: No matter your challenges, God's grace is bigger and stronger. So be strong! Be fearless! Don't lose heart! God will never abandon you! That's right, never!

Saturday February 3

II Corinthians 4:7-9 But we have this treasure in clay pots so that the awesome power belongs to God and doesn't come from us. We are experiencing all kinds of trouble, but we aren't crushed. We are confused, but we aren't depressed. We are harassed, but we aren't abandoned. We are knocked down, but we aren't knocked out.

Sacred pause: As humans we are a weak, and vulnerable lot. Still, God's power is in us. You may be down, but with God you're never out. You may feel weak, but God is strong.