

Daily Reflection on Scripture
Week of August 25
Back to School Blessing



Sunday August 25

Scripture: Proverbs 22:6 Point your kids in the right direction—when they're old they won't be lost.

Morning Prayer: God, most often this verse is translated, "Train up a child in the way they should go and then when they are old they will not depart from it". But today's translation reads, "Point our children in the right direction..." I like that different way of saying it so much more. I may not be successful in training anyone to do anything, but I can point children in the right direction by example of compassion more than any righteous training. I can point kids of all ages in the right direction more by listening to them than any preaching at them. I can point young people in the right direction more often by offering them unconditional love, than judging any of their misbehaviors. Help me to a guide along the way to our youth so that when they are grown up, more than a memorized list of righteous behaviors, they will know the way of God's love that will lead them to wholeness (Salvation), and a most fulfilled life. May it be so.

Morning Text: Point yourself in the direction of compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom. Make this your path and regardless of the day you will be successful.

Noon Text: As you eat your lunch be give thanks to God for all that you have to eat. Maybe your example of giving thanks helps someone else to give thanks as well.

Evening Text: Today has been full of so much, now it's time to rest and take care of yourself. Rest is a spiritual practice that leads to renewal. May you rest well tonight.

Monday August 26

Scripture: Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children."

Morning Prayer: God, sometimes I forget how it feels to view the world through the eyes of a child. Every moment, every day, every creature and every person with whom I interact are wonderfully unique and worthy of appreciation with a sense of child-like wonder. My prayer is that I might go through my day, remembering that I am also one of the little children to whom Jesus referred when he said, "Let the children come to me!" May I find ways to hold on to my sense of joy and child-like wonder in all circumstances. May it be so.

Morning Text: Today is a blank page, regardless of how full your schedule looks. Be mindful of how you fill the page. Like a child stay open to moments of wonder and joy.

Noon Text: Pause and look around. What do you see? How would what you see look to you as a child? Think of one way to find joy in something you see. Hold on to that.

Evening Text: You have done your best today. Release all thoughts of self criticism, or feelings that you should have done more. Be at peace as you prepare to rest.

Tuesday August 27

Scripture: Luke 12:48b Great gifts mean great responsibilities; greater gifts, greater responsibilities!

Morning Prayer: God, I love the comforts of home and the surrounding community. I feel so blessed to live where I live. Everything we need is in our hands. And today's scripture tells me that instead of just holding everything in hand, I am to own the responsibility of sharing what I have with others. Not only that, if I hope for even more than I currently have, I have to accept even more responsibility to share. Why wasn't I taught this earlier in life? I mean I was taught to get all I can so I can look successful, so I can continue to find ways to be even more comfortable than I already am. And yet this morning I am wondering, if I don't have a purpose that's bigger than just my privilege to have so much, then what good is any of it? Help me today to take what I have in my hands to help others find comfort for their lives. May I comfort those who are discomfited even if that means I have to be discomfited a bit to comfort someone else. May it be so.

Morning Text: Begin your day with a spoken gratitude, like "There's enough". Find your own words. Come back often to your gratitude to help you stay positive and hopeful.

Noon Text: If you can take just five minutes to sit in a place of quiet it will help you face the rest of your day. Be still and know that there is enough.

Evening Text: As you slow down and prepare to rest, make sure you are offering yourself compassion for all that happened or didn't happen today. You are the beloved of God.

Wednesday August 28

Scripture: 1 John 3:18-20 My dear children, let's not just talk about love; let's practice real love. This is the only way we'll know we're living truly, living in God's reality. It's also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.

Morning Prayer: God thank You for the morning. Thank You that I wake refreshed and renewed and ready for the day. I thank You for Your amazing, incredible, never ending love for me. I trust in Your love and your plan for my life. It may not always go the way I want. I may worry about tomorrow. But knowing that You truly love me provides peace and assurance to deal with the pressures of the day. Thank You God!

Morning Text: This morning as you prepare for today remember to ask God to help you think more positively than negatively. The way you start today will impact the whole day.

Noon Text: Take a moment in the middle of your day and think of something that you have been worried about. Take a deep breath and say "God, together we have this one!"

Evening Text: The time for rest is now. Remember that God is with you through the night. Try to release your worries remembering there is enough for this night.

Thursday August 29

Scripture: Romans 12:16 Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody.

Morning Prayer: God, this scripture sets almost everything I have learned about success on its head. Who hasn't been told to do something with your life, make a name for yourself, network with the people who have power and control. And now today I read that not only should I try to get along the annoying people in my life. I should also make friends of "nobodies", and "don't be the great somebody". I am not disagreeing with what I read, I can even say that I agree that it sounds like a

better way to live. But even so, I have to confess how hard this transition is to make. I willingly confess my weakness because I want to be strong, strong enough to stand against what others call “success” and begin to define it on my own terms. No, I don’t mean my terms alone, I mean the terms that Jesus set out for me to follow. May my success be measured more by how I treat others, than what I can get by using my power and privilege over others, particularly those on the margins, the forgotten ones. May it be so.

Morning Text: Take a moment to prayerfully consider the question: How do you want to begin the rest of your life today? Ask God to help you succeed. Today is where it begins.

Noon Text: Today is a gift. Tomorrow is a hopeful dream. But right now is all you have. Give thanks for just this moment. Gratitude can change the rest of your day.

Evening Text: What has happened today has happened. You can’t go back but in this moment you can have compassion for yourself. Compassion for self will help you to rest well.

Friday August 30

Scripture: Ephesians 4:3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Morning Prayer: God, it’s so easy for me to get caught up in this current culture of divisiveness. I read a headline or watch the news and I’m immediately sucked in and can feel the tensions and anger growing inside at what I feel are injustices that run counter to my views. I shut down, feel resentful, and am no longer open to any sense of cooperation or collaboration. In those moments I look to you, God, to help me break it down. Simply be kind. Kindness breeds kindness. Love breeds love. I do believe everyone, like me, wants to feel and extend love and kindness. We all want our basic needs met. When I’m able to see others this way, it’s easier for me to simply be kind. I am better able to listen...and maybe even learn something new. I am able to contribute to building a culture of peace. May it always be so.

Morning Text: Today is a new day fraught with endless possibilities to put love and kindness out into the world. Thank God for offering you the gift of a new day to do so.

Noon Text: How can it be half the day is spent already? Ask God to help you slow down so that you can live each moment without haste taking notice of yourself and others.

Evening Text: Today has been full of so much, now it’s time to rest and take care of yourself. Tomorrow will come soon enough. May you rest well tonight.

Saturday August 31

Scripture: Colossians 3:21 Parents, don’t come down too hard on your children or you’ll crush their spirits.

Morning Prayer: God, children are our greatest blessing. Thank you so much for trusting us with their care. At times, the task of rearing them is daunting. Sometimes the many influences coming at them from all directions scares me knowing of the potential temptations they face. Please help all of us who have the responsibility to guide and mentor our children; help us find the right balance between love and discipline. Show us how to provide a consistent model of healthy behavior and set reasonable expectations for them to learn. If and when we need to discipline, help us to come up with fair responses that offer opportunities for both of us to learn and grow. Remind us to pause if we’re uncertain what to do; maybe even reach out to others for guidance. If we do over react, help us swallow our pride and apologize so they can learn from our example that its okay to be human in all

its imperfect glory. Perfection is an impossible and unattainable goal anyway, so help us to find wisdom to guide our children well. May it be so.

Morning Text: Today is a brand new opportunity to love and guide our children. Consider how you might be an example of love in their presence today.

Noon Text: Breathe in the love & grace of God. Hold. Slowly exhale. Repeat this as often as you need to center and be a force of compassion today for yourself and others.

Evening Text: As you lay your children and yourself to rest, offer a hug and a word of praise. Let them know what a gift it was to share the day with them. Hug yourself too.