

# BIBLE

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## Biweekly Devotional: Top 10 Most Encouraging Scripture

The Bible is a great source of encouragement. Just knowing that the God of all creation knows your needs, loves you and desires a relationship with you will make any day brighter. So, regardless of how your day is going, make it brighter by sitting back and reading the Top 10 Most Encouraging Scriptures.

**Day One (#10) Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9**

The Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the churches in Galatia because he had heard that the church was beginning to follow some new teachings that were different than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul begins by reminding the Galatians of his history and the sacrifices he has made for the gospel and moves to reminding them that they are no longer under the Old Testament law, but through faith in Jesus Christ are free to live according to the Spirit of God. Read Galatians 6:1-10 to see how Paul wraps up this letter, encouraging the Galatians to do good to all and to not get discouraged.

- In verse 1, Paul speaks to what it means to live in community with Christians and to properly care for one another. What does he say we are to do when a brother or sister is caught in sin?
- In verse 2, he asks us to carry each other's burden. What do you think that means in today's world where so often we strive for our own independence?
- He goes on to warn us not to think too highly of ourselves and to test our own actions. How might you test your own actions?
- Why do you suppose he warns us against comparing ourselves to others?
- Verse 7 includes a warning that while we may be able to deceive others with our actions, God is not fooled: we reap what we sow. What outcome does he describe in verse 8?
- If we will ultimately reap what we sow, what does Paul encourage us to do?

- How does that make you feel to know that ultimately your good deeds will pay a reward?
- Can you think of any good deeds you stopped doing because you became discouraged over the results?
- Who does Paul say we are to especially help?
- Why do you think we should pay special attention to the needs of believers?

*Pray and ask God to open your eyes to how you can help those around you, especially those who are believers. Commit that you will keep your eyes on him and not get discouraged if you don't see immediate results, trusting in him that you will reap a harvest eventually.*

**Day Two (#9) Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24**

Mark 11 tells the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on what has become known as Palm Sunday, when the people were expectantly thinking he was going to defeat the Romans and take rule as king of Israel. Today's reading tells a short side story that teaches the disciples the power of faith. Read Mark 11:1-25 to learn what happens.

- According to verse 12, why did Jesus go to look at the fig tree?
- Did he find what he was looking for?
- What did he say to the tree?
- What does Jesus do in verses 15-17?
- How did the religious leaders react to this (verse 18)?
- According to the passage, how long was it until they saw the fig tree the next time? Have you ever seen a tree wither in 24 hours?
- What is Jesus' reaction when Peter points out the withered tree (verse 22)? To what does he credit for this astonishing act? Does Jesus mention any special words or actions that were needed on his part, or just faith in God?
- What example does Jesus give as a possible action with faith? Does he mean a literal mountain or does he mean a figural mountain? Does it matter?
- What is the key to answered pray according to Jesus (verse 24)?
- Does he put any conditions on this instruction?

*Pray and thank God that he hears our prayers and that, through faith, we have what we ask for in prayer.*

**Day Three (#8) Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.  
Psalm 37:4**

The 37th chapter of Psalm is credited to King David. It was originally an acrostic poem where, in the original Hebrew, the stanzas each begin with a successive letter of the alphabet. Even though that aspect has been lost in our English translation, it still provides some great encouragement. Read Psalm 37:1-40 to learn how King David felt toward God in this particular time of difficulty.

- What advice does David give in verses 1-2?
- How do you think David's experience against so many enemies over time helped him be able to take this long-term view?
- In verse 3, how does he recommend the readers act in times of adversity?
- If we delight in the Lord, what does David say he will give us?
- Why are those two points tied together? If we aren't delighting in the Lord, is it possible for our desires to align with God's?
- In verse 7, David provides three additional pieces of advice for readers. What are they?
- If we know from verse 4 he will give us the desires of our heart when we delight in him, how important is it to be patient and wait for him?
- When have you experienced a delay between praying for something and receiving it? How long did you have to wait?
- In verse 23, David points out an additional benefit to delighting in the Lord. What is it?
- What additional benefit is mentioned in verse 24?

*Pray and thank God that if we determine to live our lives according to his will and delight in his will, he will give us the desires of our heart and keep us from falling. Ask him to shape your heart to desire the things that please him.*

**Day Four (#7) And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19**

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christians of Philippi to teach them and encourage them in their faith. Paul begins in chapter 1 by expressing his confidence that God will continue his work through them until Christ returns. Read Philippians 4:4-20 as Paul concludes with some advice as well as thanks them for their generous gifts for his ministry.

- What does Paul encourage them to do at all times (verse 4)?
- He also advises them not to be anxious about anything. What are they to do instead?
- How are they to present their requests to God?
- What type of peace does Paul say they will have if they do this (verse 7)?
- What does Paul advise them to think on so they won't become anxious (verse 8)?
- In thanking them for their gifts, what does Paul say he has learned (verse 11)?
- In verse 13, what does Paul say he can do? How?

- Paul then thanks the Philippians for their many gifts over time and promises that because of their faithfulness God will do what (verse 19)?
- What is the difference between meeting wants and desires and needs? What does Paul specifically say God will meet?

*Pray and thank God that he can meet all of your needs through the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Ask him to give you peace and to help you to not be anxious as you wait on him to supply your needs.*

**Day Five (#6) I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Psalm 32:8**

King David's life was marked by tremendous highs and lows. He had the courage to defeat great armies and mighty warriors, but was still capable of committing adultery and murder. Psalm 32:1-11 gives us a glimpse into how David felt about confessing his sin and the restoration of his relationship with God.

- In verses 1-2, how does David say he feels now that his sins are forgiven?
- In verses 3-4, how does David describe the way he felt when he was not confessing his sin?
- Why do you think David waited to confess his sin?
- Have you ever known you did something wrong but failed to confess it? How did you feel?
- In verse 5, David seems to outline a process whereby he acknowledges his sin, confesses it in full and is forgiven. Is it really that simple?
- David is then so encouraged by how he is feeling, he advises everyone to do the same thing. Do you regularly confess your sins?
- How often do you think we should confess our sins? Should we confess each time we sin? How soon after we sin should we confess?
- In verses 6 and 7, David implies a connection between confession of sin and protection from danger. Do you think the two are connected?
- In verse 8, God says he will instruct David and teach him the way he should go and will advise him as he keeps his loving eye on him. Is this promise just for David? Do you think it applies to us today as well? Are there any conditions we must meet in order for us to have this same relationship with God?

*Pray and thank God that he sent his son Jesus to die on the cross in payment for our sins. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal sin in your life so you can confess it. Then ask God to instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.*

### **Weekend Reading: Most Encouraging Scripture**

You shouldn't be discouraged that we could only fit the Top 10 Encouraging Scriptures on our list. We've manage to squeeze in a few extras that didn't quite make our list:

- Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
- For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Ephesians 3:14-21
- "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation." Psalm 91:14-16

### **Day Six (#5) Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9**

After the death of Moses, Joshua was chosen to lead the people of Israel. He had proven to be a faithful source of support to Moses, and more importantly, a faithful follower of God. The Lord told Joshua to prepare to enter the land he had promised Abraham and that no one would be able to stand against him until they finally received the Promised Land. Read Joshua 1:1-11 to see how God instructed and encouraged Joshua so the Jewish people would know that hand of God was on him as it had been on Moses.

- Joshua was chosen to lead the people of Israel after the death of Moses. How do think he might have felt being asked to follow such a great leader?
- Have you ever been asked to take on a significant role you weren't sure if you were ready for? How did it make you feel?
- When you're faced with an intimidating task, how do you prepare?

- How much do you rely on God to be successful on large assignments? Should you also rely on God for help in small assignments? How do you determine when to take your challenges to God?
- Beginning in verse 7, God instructs Joshua to be strong and very courageous. Do you think this is an acknowledgement that God realizes we have to do things that go against our nature which we may not find easy?
- God immediately addressed the importance of obedience to success. How much flexibility does God give Joshua in verse 7 in deciding whether or not to follow God's direction if he wants to be successful?
- In verse 8, what direction does God give Joshua for how to be prosperous and successful?
- What does it mean to "meditate" on God's word? How is that different than just reading it?
- God tells Joshua to do everything written in his word. Are there any instructions in the Bible that you ignore or disregard because you don't really think they matter?
- What three conditions does God place on his promise of prosperity and success in verse 8?

*Pray and thank God for the opportunities he gives you to utilize your gifts and to lead. Ask him to teach you how to approach difficult tasks with confidence in him and in his faithfulness. Pray also that he will give you wisdom and strength to achieve the tasks before you.*

**Day Seven (#4) For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39**

Today, we pick up from our reading in Romans last week. As we continue in Romans chapter 8, we're going to discover that since we have been adopted by God to be his children, no one can stand against us and no one and no thing can separate us from the love of God. Read Romans 8:32-39 to see how our relationship as the children of God makes us more than conquerors.

- If God gave his only son to die for you, is there anything he would withhold from you according to verse 32?
- Next Paul points out that if God sent his only son to justify you, or make you holy, who can stand before God to condemn you?
- Who do we have at the right hand of God interceding for us (verse 34)?
- In verse 35, Paul goes on to ask who or what can separate us from the love of Christ? Is there anyone or anything that can separate us from the love of Christ?
- Paul concludes that there is not anything, because we are more than conquerors through Christ and lists ten things that cannot separate us from the love of God. What are they?

- Do you ever feel separated from God’s love? In spite of your feelings, are you truly separated?

*Pray and thank God that he sent his son Jesus to die on the cross in payment for our sins and because we are his children there is no person or no thing that can separate us from his love.*

**Day Eight (#3) Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23**

The book of Lamentations is to many people, the saddest book in all of the Bible. Even its name means “the passionate expression of grief or sorrow.” It tells the story of the people of Israel after they have turned their backs on God. The cities are in ruins and the people are destitute. Read Lamentations 3:19-42 to learn what the writer says still gives him hope in the midst of this horrible time and his plan for restoration.

- How does the author describe the state of his soul?
- What does he remember that give him hope?
- What reason does the author give for not being consumed (verse 22)?
- What does he say is new every morning and never fails?
- What about the Lord does he say is great in verse 23?
- What does the author mean when he says “The Lord is my portion...”?
- In verse 25, who does the author say the Lord is good to?
- How does he say we should wait for the Lord?
- Is it hard for you to wait quietly for the Lord to move in a situation?
- After reflecting on the Lord’s faithfulness, the author seems to have a much brighter attitude in verses 31-33. What three revealing statements does he make about the nature of God in these verses?
- In verses 40-42, the author proposes a plan to be restored to God. What is it?

*Pray and thank God that he is a compassionate and faithful God who is willing to forgive us of our sins. Thank him for sending his son to die for our sins so that our relationship with him is restored. Thank him that he is good to you because your hope is in him.*

**Day Nine (#2) And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Luke 12:29-31**

Luke 12 begins with a crowd of many thousands following Jesus. The crowd is so large, people are trampling each other. Yet, the religious leaders of the day were secretly plotting to kill Jesus. This chapter tells the story of Jesus reassuring his followers that they should not worry about their lives for God knows what is happening and cares for them so much the hairs of their head are even numbered. He then goes on to warn the crowd against the dangers of storing up riches for themselves while ignoring the needs of others. Read Luke 12:22-31 to learn the advice Jesus gives on how not to worry.

- What three examples does Jesus give of things people should not worry about (verse 22)?
- What example does Jesus use in verse 24 of something that doesn't worry but has what it needs?
- Who feeds them?
- What benefit do you gain from worrying about anything? Can it make you live longer, grow taller or be richer?
- If nothing is accomplished through worrying, why do you do it?
- What does he use as his clothing example in verse 27?
- What reassurance does he give in verse 30 about eating and drinking?
- What should we do instead of running after food and drink?
- What does he say will happen if we seek his kingdom (verse 31)

*Pray and thank God that he loves you so much that even the hairs on your head are numbered. Thank him that he knows your needs and will provide, if we stop worrying and seek him first. Ask for his help to stop worrying and to focus on him.*

**Day Ten (#1) What then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31**

Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome is full of encouragement for the believers of the time as well as believers of today. Read Romans 8:18-31 to see how Paul helps the Christians of Rome understand how the Holy Spirit helps us be victorious.

- In verses 18-25, Paul explains that though we may be suffering now, all of creation, not just us, but all of creation is in anguish waiting for Christ to return. What does he compare that pain to in verse 22?
- Though we may be in anguish and not even know what to pray for, what good news does Paul share in verse 26?
- The Holy Spirit prays for us not according to our own wishes, but according to what (verse 27)?

- What incredibly encouraging word does Paul share with us in verse 28?
- What condition does he put on it? What does it mean to be “called according to his purpose”?
- How do you know if you have been called according to God’s purpose?
- So if we have been called according to God’s purpose and are justified by Jesus’ death on the cross, Paul asks “If God is for us, who can be against us?” If you are doing the will of God, is there anything that can stand against you?
- How does that make you feel to know that?

*Pray and thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit who intercedes for you in accordance with God’s will and that all things work for your good because you love him and are called according to his purpose.*

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