

appnotes

DAY 1 READ MATTHEW 23:23-26

1

How many times have we watched with sadness as a celebrity falls from prominence? They have the power to touch lives with their talents. But then a pattern of self-destructive behavior emerges and can even end in a tragic suicide. We shake our heads. They had it all! They were rich, talented, loved and celebrated. Their life looked so perfect from the outside. Then we discover that it was an act. We all act on the stages of our lives. Like the Pharisees in today's reading, we like to look good even when things are broken inside. The exciting thing about Jesus is that He is not interested in seeing us clean up our acts. Jesus is about healing the heart. The Pharisees refused to go to Jesus and let Him restore their hearts (John 5:40). If you really want to change, it starts in the heart. Will you invite Jesus into broken places in your life this year?

DAY 2 READ PROVERBS 2:1-22

2

In a scene that has played out in countless homes over the years, a parent looks down at an inactive child and asks, "Are you listening to me?" Two questions are being asked. First, are you tuned in to hear my voice? And if so . . . why are you still sitting there? Listening is a part of finding our way in life. In today's passage, a father is urging his son to listen to his wise advice about life. The son will discover the way past the many pitfalls in life if he will hear and follow the wise advice. God speaks to us every day through the Bible and the Spirit. Are you tuned in? And if so . . . what are you doing with what God is telling you?

DAY 3 READ PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

3

Have you ever seen one of those champagne pyramids where the top glass is filled until it overflows into the glasses below? In today's passage, the Apostle Paul reveals that the same thing happens in our lives. Whatever we fill our mind with flows over into the rest of our lives. Paul makes it clear that we need to be discerning in what we focus our eyes on. That means that we choose to emulate people and put things on our screens that help us become more like Christ. The things we see, shape us. What do you need to stop looking at and what do you need to start savoring instead? Who do you need to start patterning your life after?

DAY READ JAMES 3:1-12

4

Kids say the darnedest things! They share a private comment you didn't want repeated in public or blurt out what everyone else is thinking! Adults say the wrong things, too. Sometimes insults are lobbed like bombs, are fired like a well-aimed shot from a rifle, or sit like napalm on our hearts, causing pain that won't go away. In today's reading, James reveals that, even though the tongue is small, it is not to be underestimated. Our words have the power to give life or destroy life (see Proverbs 18:2). The things we say reveal more about us than the people we talk about (see Matthew 12:34). If you were to take all your words from the past week and put them into three categories—Building Up, Tearing Down, Worthless—which one would have the most in it? Let's try this: Give ten genuine compliments to people you encounter today.

DAY READ PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14

5

Have you ever forgotten to disengage the emergency brake before moving your car? If the embarrassment wasn't enough, the car won't perform to its potential and continues to break the longer you keep your foot on the gas. Regrets, past failures, and old wounds are like brakes on our lives. But, so are past successes. Paul had a lot of both. His past was full of potentially crippling failures (he had made it his life mission to wipe out Christianity). Paul was also on the fast track to prominence in his community. But after meeting Jesus, Paul realized that the Cross removed his failures and redefined what success means. He was free to move forward because he was no longer looking backward. Are your past mistakes or accomplishments holding you back? Where could you go on the highway of life this year if you disengaged the emergency brake?

AppNotes are available on our Facebook page, Monday-Friday.

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