

LOOKING UP - DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Daily reflections to help us Look-Up during Lock-Down.

December 28, 2020 - January 1, 2021

LOOKING UP - December 28th

READING: Psalm 121

REFLECTION: Our focus determines our direction. Whether we are driving, walking or making plans for our future - where we focus determines where we end up. Corrie Ten Boom once said, "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest." Whatever you are facing today, let us all resolve to set our focus on the Lord.

PRAYER: Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the assurance that You watch over us and are tireless in your help. We turn our eyes from looking down at all of the problems of our world and set our sights on You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

LOOKING UP - December 29th

READING: Psalm 23, John 10

REFLECTION: Whose lead are you following? It is interesting to note that even in professional circles Jesus is often referred to as an exemplar of excellence in leadership. The kind of leadership Jesus demonstrated has been described as "Servant Leadership". When we read Psalm 23 and John 10 we see a picture of what the following the leadership of Jesus means in our lives. As we follow him, we experience contentment, security, abundance and life to the full. Jesus demonstrates the full extent of his servant leadership as he gave of himself for our good, even laying down his life in sacrifice upon the cross so that we could be set free from sin and enjoy fullness of life for eternity.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, forgive me for when I am self-willed, stubborn and wander away from the good you offer. I acknowledge today that you are the Good Shepherd and that because you laid down your life for me upon the cross I can now enjoy life to the full. Today I lay down my pride and humbly declare my need of your ultimate leadership as the Lord of my life.

LOOKING UP - December 30th

READING: Psalm 103, Psalm 42

REFLECTION: Did you know it is OK to talk to yourself? While some might think it strange to speak aloud to one's self, this Psalm shows us a powerful way of getting our focus on God. In this Psalm, David is essentially preaching aloud to his very own soul as a reminder of God's goodness. In other places like Psalm 42 and 43 the psalmist again speaks to himself saying, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God". These psalms are an encouragement to us to preach God's truth to our own souls. We also need to be careful of our own inner dialogue, the things we tell ourselves. **If some of us spoke to others** the way we speak to ourselves, we would not have any friends. We might even be charged with verbal abuse! Take some time today to verbally remind your own soul of God's goodness.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, when life gets challenging you know that my soul can often feel downcast and forget Your goodness. Help me to speak Your truth to my own soul

LOOKING UP - December 31

READING: Proverbs 16

REFLECTION: What are your plans for 2021? Perhaps you are looking at some health goals, self-improvement, developing a new skill, spending less, giving more - maybe your goal is to simply make it through today and get to tomorrow! In Proverbs 16:3 we are reminded that whatever our plans may be, we are to commit them to the Lord. I am reminded of that song by Robin Mark called 'Jesus, All to Jesus' where we sing, "All of my ambitions, hopes and plans, I surrender these into your hands". As we stand at the edge of a new year, let's commit our plans and our whole self to God and see His success in all we do.

PRAYER: Lord, 2020 has not been an easy year for me, you know my struggles and the unmet longings of my heart. I pray that however the coming year unfolds, that You would be at the forefront of all I do. I declare my need of your direction and desire that I would be a success in Your eyes this coming year. In Jesus' name, Amen.

LOOKING UP - January 1st

READING: 2 Corinthians 5

REFLECTION: When Jesus told us that we would have life to the full in him he wasn't simply talking about having a happier and more comfortable life here on earth. Jesus doesn't offer to simply improve our lives as if he were an add-on that is meant to upgrade our life. In fact, we may find that the closer we follow Jesus, the more resistance we receive from the world around us! The kind of life that Jesus offers is a brand new existence in him. The life he offers is meant to be such a profound change that he calls it being "born again" (John 3:3) , the apostle Paul described it as moving from "death to life" (Ephesians 2:1-5) and being a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our life in Christ is meant to be a whole new existence where we no longer live for our own interests but for Christ.

PRAYER: Lord, at the start of a new year I declare that, "In Christ I am a new creation; the old has gone and the new has come". With your strength and with the guidance of Your Spirit, help me to live out this reality in my day-to-day life. Thank you that I am no longer defined by my sinful past but now covered in the righteousness of Jesus Christ for eternity. In his name I pray, Amen.