

**30 Days
of
Mission
Devotions
2012**

**Before the Mission Trip
Pray for me
Ephesians 6:18-20**

The armor of God passages have been the source of strength for some many of God's children and will be for you, but I want to ask you if you have someone whom you can ask to pray for you. Everyone should have at least one person that they know will pray for them if they ask them to. No one should have to pray alone, especially when they are about to do eternal work. God records this passage so that we can see how one of his best missionaries humbled himself and asked others to pray for him. If Paul needed someone to pray for him we will too. The person whom you ask to pray needs to be a person who believes that God answers them. That person needs to be someone who loves you and who is willing to share your burdens. That person needs to be someone that you can count on to pray for you, not once or twice, but who will not let go of the ropes of prayer until your time of need has passed. Do you have someone like that in your life? You need to enlist some people like this to pray for you, have you? Paul told them exactly what to pray for, have you? Will you? Make a list of those that you need to enlist prayers from. What will you will have them pray? Make a commitment to enlist their prayer support today.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

What are you craving?

Luke 18:18-23

By Trish Pierson

In Luke 18, Jesus had an encounter with a rich man. This young man thought he had it made. After all, it appeared as if he did. He had youth, riches, and knowledge, everything the people of his day thought a successful man needed to have. Sounds a lot like our day, doesn't it? Look at the ads on television, the focus is on "younger looking skin", "buy this and be happy", "we'll make you wealthy". The sad fact is that the rich young ruler craved the riches of this earthly life more than he did the riches of an eternal life with Christ. Too many people in our world today also crave those "treasures on earth, where moth and dust destroy." Matthew 6:19

What about you? Is there something in your life that you crave more than Jesus? Is there a habit, a relationship, material goods that you covet, you crave more than Him? Take time today to fall before Him and ask Him to take away any desire, any craving that is not pleasing to Him. Ask Him to replace it with a hunger and thirst for him...for blessed as they who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6) and to "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:20-23)

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**What are you bringing back?
Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 7:1-8
By Trish Pierson**

A mission trip??? What do you do on a mission trip? Who's going? Who has God brought together? What do you plan to bring back with you? These are a lot of questions that are asked when a church or association plans a mission trip. But I have a few questions of my own to ask. Why are you going? What are you expecting from your mission trip? What do you want to see God do? What do you want Him to do, in, through, and around you? What are you bringing back with you? Are you asking for, seeking for, and knocking you for God things to take place. The mission trips I remember very vividly are those where the groups going were prayerfully prepared. They were praying before they went, invited others to join them in their prayers, and prayed during the trip.

I encourage you to ask God to reveal Himself to you in ways you never have expected and to experience things you have never experienced. Are you searching for Him in the midst of the trip? Do you want to find Him? Do you desire that those you minister to and with will find Him as well? Sure, that special souvenir that will remind you of your time is nice. But what about that changed heart? What about that person who has come to love the Lord and give his/herself to Him? Which is more important? So what are you bringing back with you?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

What clothes do you have on?

Ephesians 6:10-18

By Trish Pierson

Several years ago, my husband was invited to preach at a church in East TN. I went along to keep him company and I thought my suitcase was packed with the appropriate clothing for Sunday. When we walked in that morning, what did we see?? Men and women, boys and girls, all wearing bib overalls, flannel shirts, and straw hats!!!! We didn't realize beforehand that that Sunday was Harvest Sunday. We definitely did not have the right clothes on!

What about you? Do you have on the right clothes? As you enter the mission field, as you place your feet where God is directing you, remember that you are not wrestling against flesh and blood. Satan desires to keep you from doing what God has called you to do today. That is the very reason you need to remember to put on the **WHOLE** armor of God as Ephesians 6:10-18 tells us. Not just one piece, not just two, but the whole armor! Ending with the prayer for yourself and others in God's army. So....what clothes do you have on? Are you putting them on daily?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

He is There
Isaiah 41:10
By Trish Pierson

I remember my first day on the mission field after language school. We were picked up at the airport by the entire mission-all six people!!! We piled into the mission vehicles along with our ton of luggage and get to a local restaurant for lunch. The missionary couple who lived closest to us informed us that they had to leave a little early due to a death in one of the churches. This church happened to be one that we would be responsible for once we got settled. I asked the missionary what had happened. He told me that the man died from a snake bite and then explained that this snake was the kind that chases people through the jungle. I was ready to immediately turn around and get back on the next plane!! Is this your first mission trip? Or is this your hundredth? Are you ministering in your own town or are you ministering to the uttermost parts of the world? You may be a little nervous about going or you may be a pro at this. Things may happen while you are on your journey. Things that make you want to take the next plane out of there!!! Things that don't always go the way you think they should or as they have been planned. But the one thing you can count on is the fact that God has promised that He is there (Jehovah-Shammah). Isaiah 41:10 gives us one such promise. If we are His, then He will uphold us. Even though you may be a little anxious, He tells you know to fear. Do you know that He is there? Do you trust on His promises? What do you need to do? Is there anything you need to share with Him now? What assurance you can have!!! Step out in faith, rest on His promises!!!

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

What's My Name
John 15:1-10
By Gary Williams

Luke 12:12 (KJV) ¹²For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say. "If you are from God, tell me my name," said this young girl. "If God really sent you here, then God will tell you my name," she said, while smiling at me. This was the first time we were working in this large Mayan village of about 1600 people.

"What's my name" she said again. A small voice inside of me was giving me a name and in my mind I was arguing, that's not a Mayan name. She asked again and I said your name is Louise. She looked very surprised. Then she said you must come with me and let me tell my parents. Because I listened to the Holy Spirit I was able to witness to her whole family including her uncle.

While on your mission trip, pray that you will listen for God to speak to you.

God wants to speak through you, but you must be listening.

Three things you can do before and during your Mission trip.

I. Pray

II. Study

III. Prepare for the specific work you expect to do.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Coming Clean
Psalm 66:18; Hebrews 12:1-1

During my days in Central America cholera came through at least twice. Panic would ensue, and rightly so, it is a very deadly disease. Everyone became exceptionally concern about cleanliness. Water was boiled, and everything was washed over and over again. Yet still many died. I recently took a cruise to Alaska. The ship's crew was instructed not to shake hands with any of the passengers so as not to transmit disease. Everywhere you turned there were sanitizers. Yet a type of flu still broke out on the ship. We have a tendency to clean the exterior and leave the heart untouched. God is not man and He looks much deeper than the surface, He searches the heart. What is "It" that you need to confess and forsake?

You are preparing to go on a holy mission, a God-size task is before you are you preparing your heart or just packing your suitcase? What is "It" that seems to so easily entangle you? Are you ready to be set free from your "It"? You really need to deal with your sin before you try to set others free of theirs. May today be a day of cleansing, forgiveness, and recommitment for you? Is there any sin in your life that would cause Him not to hear you? What are you going to do about it?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Coming Thirsty
Psalm 42:1-2; Psalm 107:9; Matthew 5:6

Some time ago I discovered a reoccurring pattern and promise in scripture: Those who come to Him thirsty are promised to have their thirst quenched. I wonder how thirsty are you? On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how thirsty are you for God to work in you and among you during this mission journey? It doesn't seem to matter where I am on a mission trip, in the Appalachian Mountains, a small village in Central America, the inner city of Montreal, the rural towns of Iowa, or Bozeman, Montana, thirsty people are everywhere. It seems that these are the ones that God puts in your path on any mission trip. Sometimes they are poor, sometimes rich, sometimes young and sometimes old, but their thirst is obvious. They don't all decide to have their thirst quenched. Some are like the Rich Young Ruler who came to Jesus, thirsty but not willing to have that thirst quenched because of what it will cost them. You are going to encounter some thirsty people along your journey and God is sending you to give them a cup of cold water in His name. But what about you, are you thirsty? Will you have your thirst quenched? Are you willing to pay the cost to have it quenched? What will it be that He asks of you for your thirst to be quenched?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Looking for Jesus

Luke 2:41-52

People take missions trips for various reasons: to reach the world; to see the world; to make a difference; to be a part of something bigger than themselves; for vacation; for a friend; for themselves. The list goes on but the one thing I can guarantee is that you will get more than you are looking for. However, some people take mission trips because they are trying to find their way back to Jesus. There may have been a time when they were much closer to Him than they are now, and there is a longing to return to Him. For many this is exactly what happens, they find Jesus taking them to a deeper walk with Him. For some it is a return and for others it is more. I don't know what it will be for you but in this passage you will find some truths that may help you as you "Look for Jesus". 1.) You may have lost Him in a day's journey but it often takes three days to find Him. So don't give up the search. 2.) You will probably be asking a lot of people along the way how to find Him. Some won't know but some will. 3.) You will find Him where you left Him. He will be doing what He always does and you won't be surprised by this. 4.) Even those who are the closest to Him can lose Him. Have you? Are you going to be looking for Jesus along your journey?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

What Will You Take?

Luke 22:35-38

At this point you probably have already packed all the things on your list and then some. Do you have what you need? I know that there will always be something that you wished that you had, but the question is do you have what you really need? What is it that you really need? It probably isn't something that can go in a suitcase or backpack. Do you even know what you need? It is interesting that in all of the training that I have done for mission trips, someone always asks what should I take. Others can tell you what they think should be important, but only Jesus can tell you what you really need. Have you asked Him what He wants you to bring? He is more than willing to equip you, but sometimes He waits for us to ask. What are you taking that you shouldn't be taking? (Unforgiveness, anger, guilt, shame, sin) What should you be taking? What does He want you to take?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

During The Mission Trip
What is your “It” for this journey?
Matthew 7:7

“It” praying is the most common of prayers recorded in scripture. God’s people would pray and fast for days for their “It”. The early church would pray all night for one man, for one thing. The prayers of scripture record an incredible single focus, an “It” in their petitions and intercessions. This “It” is not always the same, but when God’s people came to God, they knew what the “It” was that they were seeking. I have discovered that I pray the hardest, the longest, and the most passionate when I have an “It” on my heart. God has called you on this journey for a purpose. Most often what He desires is not found in the job assignment but is discovered along the journey. Our family gathers every Christmas to share our “It”. We each take turns telling one another what the one thing is we long for God to do in our life or in the life of someone we love during the coming year.

We pray for one another and then covenant to continue to pray for one another during the year. God has done some amazing things in our family as we have sought Him for our “It”. What is “It” that you long for Him to do in you during this journey? What is “It” that you long for Him to do among your group? What is “It” that you long for Him to do among those that you are going to serve? What is “It” that you want Him to do because of this journey in your church and family? Ask Him for your “It”. Seek Him for your “It”. Knock for your “It”.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

What is His "It" for this journey?

Matthew 7

No it is not a mistake; today's verse is the same as yesterdays. Yesterday you were challenged to think about what your "It" should be for this journey. Today I want to challenge you to begin to ask Him what is His "It" for you on this journey. Ask Him to reveal His "It", His will for you. Let Him know that you desire to ask for His "It" and not just any "it". What is the one thing that He would like to accomplish in you? What is the one thing that He would like to accomplish through you? Do you know what His "It" is for you for this journey? What is "It" that you need to be asking for in these days? May the Lord grant to you a searching heart so that you will not only ask for "It" but that you will begin to search for "it". May he grant to you such a deep desire for "It" that you cannot find rest but must begin to knock for "it" to be opened unto you. What is His "It"?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Be Careful What You Allow To Grow In Your Life

Hebrews 12:12-15

By Gary Williams

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

While on a mission trip in Mississippi, we were asked to help at an old church which had been moved off its foundation. Upon arriving at the church the pastor carried us around the side of the church building and pointed out the problem to us. Being 100 years old the church was sitting on large rocks. At some point a tree began to grow just under the foundation, about a foot. The people noticed it, and said they would get rid of it someday. The little tree began to grow, reaching floor level, it turned and started growing outward and then up the side of the building. For many years the people looked at that tree and said, something needs to be done, but no one did anything. One day they noticed the church roof was leaking and the church was leaning to one side. All this would not have happened if they had taken care of the problem in the beginning, by removing the tree when it was small.

Today, many are allowing those little trees (sins) to grow. We look at them and say I'll take care of it later, only to find out that it has grown out of control and our spiritual foundation is leaning and leaking.

This week while on your mission trip, people you are ministering to might say something to hurt your feelings or someone in the group may say something that causes you to stop. Be careful that you don't let this grow in your life. Allowing it to grow will rob your joy not only on this mission trip but when you return home.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Giving Thanks Where Thanks Is Due
Ephesians 5:20

My years in Belize are long gone now, but the memories of the people and things that God used to shape me while there are as fresh as ever. At times, something will trigger a memory and I will weep with sadness and joy. God did so much for me during those years. There was a boy named Willie that I grew to love as a son. He is with the Lord now, but, Wow, did God use that young man to touch and transform my heart. There was an incredible preacher named Juan who suffered greatly so that his people could know Jesus. Juan still lives in my testimony. There are countless others. You have your own people and experiences that God gave to you. They are like precious pearls of great worth; they hold great value to you. God used them to make you who you are today. He will give you some more as you make this journey that He has called you to join Him in. Today I want to invite you to reflect on the goodness of the Lord. Find a quiet place and just reflect on the people and the experiences that He has given you to bring you to this place. Give Him praise; let the tears of joy flow. Shout unto Him thanksgiving. May today be a day of gratitude and praise unto the Lord.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Can't Stand Here All Day

Colossians 4:5-6

By Gary Williams

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. While standing in line waiting to place my order, there was a man with two children. He was angry about them taking too long in making up their mind what to order. He said we can't stand here all day waiting on you to order, so the kids told him what they wanted and he told the person behind the counter. He was in the middle of placing his own order when his cell phone rang; he answered it and continued to carry on a conversation with the person on the phone. The person taking his order had a surprised look on her face, not knowing what to do, because others were lining up behind him. He finished his phone call as if he was the only person ordering. The man was a local pastor and the children that he was yelling at was his grandchildren.

Do you think this person brought glory to God?

Be careful on this mission trip that all your actions bring glory to God. You never know whose watching.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

FRUIT PRODUCING

Isaiah 55:9-11

By Gary Williams

When traveling in Belize, we began the long daily trip into the jungle to do VBS and to minister to the adults. The vegetation was dense, all types of trees, vines and occasionally a cleared place for bananas or oranges to grow. Lots of different flowers blooming, absolutely unbelievable beautiful scenery. The mission team kept noticing this tree that had not a bloom or leaf on it. We decided that these trees surely must be dead and how strange it was standing there among such rich green vegetation, all dark brown and naked. Later someone had the opportunity to ask at the village about why there seemed to be a few of these trees that were dying. The reply was such a spiritual analogy that we have told it often.

The tree blooms and has leaves as other trees but when it gets ready to produce fruit, it sheds everything to the point of appearing dead. Then the tree puts all its strength into producing fruit.

- Acts 12:1 – Let us lay aside every weight (baggage in our minds) that might so easily slow us down and let us eagerly do the work that is set before us.
- Acts 20:24 – My life is worth nothing (no purpose) unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus – the work of telling others about Jesus.

This week set aside everything that might hinder you. Put everything you have into “producing fruit”. Keep your eyes on Jesus, stay focused. God is in this so that you may produce fruit for His kingdom.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD’S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Listen for that Small Still Voice

I Kings 19:9-18

By Gary Williams

I Kings 19:12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

While leading a mission group to Mississippi, we were staying in an old school building, with an old gym that had a large roll up door. During the day a kid climbed to the top (20 ft.) of the doors and wedged a piece of wood in the top so that the door would not roll up. We were pulling our vans inside at night to keep them safe. A couple of the younger volunteers wanted to climb up and take out the piece of wood. I decided I should do this, so I climbed up the large door, reached the top and grabbed the piece of wood. The wood broke and I found myself falling backward toward a concrete floor about to land on by back. I'm not sure how fast 180 pounds falls from 20 feet, but things seem to go in slow motion. While falling I heard this small still voice saying, "Get your feet under you and the moment you hit the concrete roll backwards". I'm not sure how I got my feet under me, because I was already falling, but I fell 20 feet and hit the concrete, rolled backwards and came out without anything happening to me. All because of that small still voice.

This week listen for that small still voice. Have you ever heard His voice before? If so what did He say?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Are You Anxious?
Matthew 6:24-34**

What is consuming your thought in these days? What is it that you seem to be fusing over? What is it that you are fearful that He may not provide? You say, "I am just being cautious." Are you? What does your heart reveal? Are you having a problem trusting?

Some people are so fearful, so anxious that they never go anywhere or do anything. Others are constantly on the move because they are fearful of staying still, fearful that they might miss something. You would think that those who have decided to go on a mission trip would be people of faith and thus not anxious. But let me tell you something the groups that I have led and been a part of are usually divided in equal parts: half filled with faith and half that are filled with fear. I don't know which would best describe you. If you are of the faith group then strengthen those that are weak. If you are of the fearful group then get close to those who are not and listen to the words of the One who is constantly saying "Fear not!"

The fact that God is often saying, "Fear not!" means that He doesn't discard the fearful. Instead He calls them to go deeper and farther with Him. He invites them to join Him in a journey that He knows is fearful to them. He doesn't tell them to stay home, but invites them to come along. Walking with Him in a journey like this has a way of turning people that are generally anxious and fearful into people of faith. May this be said of you. May it be evident in your life today.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

DON'T GET TOO BUSY TO SEE GOD

2 Kings 6:17

By Gary Williams

While we were in Belize on a mission trip, the group spent the last night in a very nice hotel. The hotel sits on the edge of several acres of an undeveloped jungle-like area. Each morning you can sit on the balcony of the restaurant and watch the parrots and toucans fly in and out of the trees. Down in this area is an iguana reserve (common name for the larger lizard there). We wandered down the tiny path and up a hill into an open area. There we found a large caged area. The attendant let us into the caged area. We walked in and looked around – we saw no iguanas. The attendant over heard us talking, “they must have sent us to the wrong building, because there were no iguanas.” He came in and begins to point them out to us – the cage was full – they were everywhere – even on the rafters above our heads.

Sometimes when we are in the middle of so much work in the ministry we cannot really see what is happening. Stop for a little while and think back over the day - where did you see God? Most people live on the surface, they miss the most astonishing things, they see yet they do not see; they hear, yet do not hear – never letting it sink beyond outer consciousness. They are guarded.

Pray that God will open your spiritual eyes to see what your normal busy eyes would not see.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD’S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Showing Grace
I Peter 4:8-10
By Gary Williams

While sitting at the hospital with my mom, I was studying and preparing lessons on “Grace”. I had been reading about God’s grace (favor) in the Old Testament and about Jesus’ grace (favor) in the New Testament. How others are to see Jesus in us, in our actions and deeds. Later, I was down in the lobby getting coffee. I saw a blind man with a cane walking down the hall. Of all the people that were standing around the area, he stopped in front of me and asked could I direct him to the elevators? I said yes, just keep walking and you will come to them. Suddenly I remembered what I had been studying. I said to the man let me walk you to the elevators. Upon reaching the elevators, he asked me if I could push the eighth floor for him. I said ok, and then I realized “grace” would ride with him and make sure he gets off on the 8th Floor. Arriving at the 8th floor I ask him what room number and was about to tell him what direction to turn, when I realized “grace” would walk with him to the room. I walked with him and we found the room.

If we follow Jesus, grace needs to fill our mission team. Being like Jesus means that we are not always demanding to get our own way, that we are never too busy to serve each other. Paul said we should "serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13).

"Carry each other’s burdens," (Galatians 6:2).

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than ourselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Ask God to help you be “grace” for someone today. Have you been “grace” this week?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD’S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**After The Mission Trip
Are You Overwhelmed Yet?**

Psalm 61

Mission trips have a way of overwhelming us. The needs are so great and we feel so small, but it is in the midst of times like this that God shines. When we are overwhelmed He waits for us to turn to him. I remember getting off the plane in Costa Rica and being shuffled off to what would be our new home as we studied Spanish, I felt so small and so inadequate. I couldn't understand a thing and had to rely on a missionary that only had one semester of Spanish. During the months that followed, I grew in my ability with the language, but I never did get over the feeling of being overwhelmed. I had to rely on God. He had me exactly where He wanted me, dependent upon Him.

Honestly, I did not like that feeling at all. I like being in a situation that I at least think I can manage. As time went on and we finally arrived in Belize I realized the most fruitful times of ministry were those when I felt overwhelmed. In those moments I and others experienced God more.

I hope that you find yourself being overwhelmed as you continue on this journey. When this happens, I hope that you will trust in the Lord more and more. May you be gloriously overwhelmed in the days ahead. Don't worry, God is never overwhelmed.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Rough Road
I Peter 1:4-16
By Gary Williams

The Bible tells us that following Jesus will not always be an easy road to travel. One will encounter many bumps, pot holes, detours, while following Jesus. But we are promised at the end of the journey it will be worth the struggles.

I was reminded of this during a trip this past March. My wife and I traveled to Belize, Central America. I had made many mission trips to Belize since '92, but this time we were on vacation.

I knew it was about a three hour drive from the airport to the place where we would turn off the main road to travel to the beach. I knew it was a dirty, dusty road, but was told it was only 25 miles from main road. What I was not told was how rough the road was. There were not many people traveling on this road, but just 25 miles should not be any problem right.... Wrong.....

I had rented a small short wheel basic SUV. The road was like traveling on an old wash board. We were celebrating our anniversary, but I thought it was going to end in a divorce. My idea was to drive fast and we would get there faster. Not good, we bounced from one side of the road to the other, like someone bouncing a basketball.

I began thinking about turning back, finding another way. But I knew there was no other way to drive to the resort. We decided to slow down enjoy the drive and take in the scenery, up to this point all we had seen was us disagreeing with each other. After calming down we drove the 25 miles in about 1 ½ hours.

Finally we reached the small village, found our hotel on the beach; found ourselves on the beach and concluded the journey was worth it.

Nowhere in scripture does it tell us that our journey in this life will be easy. It will have its ruts and rough roads. We may want to turn back sometimes. But we are promised at the end of the journey, it will be worth the trip when our heavenly Father says, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

How has your journey been so far? Has it been worth it?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Show and Tell
2 Thessalonians 3:13
By Trish Pierson

When we came back to the States on “stateside assignment” years ago, we were excited to see friends and family and to share with them, as well as with churches, what God was doing in the place He had sent us. We quickly found out that people may have asked us about the work, but they really weren’t interested. They were merely being polite. They really didn’t want to know how God was working in Willie’s life or how He had raised up a national leader for one of the local churches. They really didn’t want to hear how God radically healed physical sicknesses or how He healed broken relationships. But that didn’t stop us from showing and telling what God did in us, with the nationals, and with the teams who shared in the ministry with us. That didn’t stop us from telling our story over and over again. If only one or two were impacted, if only one or two caught the ember that meant that a fire for missions had started. From that small ember, a mighty fire would start. We have seen and heard from those who have been set afire. Some are now serving on the mission field, some are pasturing churches with a mission mindset, and others are faithful in sharing/participating in missions in their local church. As you return to your families, your home church, your work or school, you will have people ask you how the trip was. So do tell them the story, show them the pictures, and, yes, even share the souvenirs with them. Some may ask just to be polite, some will ask just to get more information, but, praise the Lord, there WILL be those who will catch that ember that is on fire in you and the fire will continue to flame. I encourage you to look for those who are truly interested. They will be the ones who will ask you question after question. They will be the ones who will want to see the pictures over and over again. They will be the ones who will want to know names to go with the faces. They will want to know when the next trip is and where? So don’t grow weary with doing good. The good of showing and telling about Jesus Christ.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD’S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Sea of Return
Hebrews 12:1-4
By Gary Williams

Hebrews 12:1 “..... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

While on vacation in Belize I was walking on the beach, and I noticed a couple of men throwing something back into the ocean. As I got closer I could see that the waves had washed some trash upon the beach in front of their hotel. What I didn't understand was this, instead of picking up the trash and disposing of it, they threw it back into the ocean.

The next morning as I walked I noticed the same items back on the beach again.

We do this with sin in our life. It gets washed up, shown to us, so that we can dispose of it properly. But like those men on the beach, we toss it back, hoping it will not turn up again, but we will have to deal with it again.

What are you just tossing around instead of tossing aside? Isn't it time for you to become untangled with this?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Did You See the Shot I Just Made?

By Gary Williams

Jer. 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

The upstairs walking track at the gym is just above the basketball court. As I was walking I watched the person below shooting baskets. He would dribble out and shoot a three-pointer. If he made it he would look up with a big smile, to see if anyone was watching and saw his good shot. If he missed the shot he did not look up.

Sometimes in serving God we get that way. We want people to brag on us and give us a lot of praise. It's not for us to receive praise or glory; instead we should want to see God glorified through our service. This can only happen through you when you turn any praise right to the throne of God.

1 Cor. 1:31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Consider your attitude, first to God, and then to others, you can't have a good fellowship with God if you don't have a good fellowship with God's people. As you end this week's work I want to encourage each and every one to go home with an attitude to serve and glorify God first, as his worker, then to look for the good in each other, praying for one another that we all may be fit and ready for His service.

Take time to quietly look in the rear view mirror of this week. Remember where you saw God working. Thank Him for giving you this opportunity to be a part of His work.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Returning Home
Exodus 12:24-26
By Gary Williams

Remember what the Lord has promised to all who obey His Great Commission.

Matthew 28:20 -- Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world.

God declared in Psalms 125:6, that those who go forth to share the gospel, shall doubtless come again and with rejoicing.

When you return home, there will be those with whom you try to describe your experience that will be totally disinterested and those that will not understand what you are talking about when you share your experience. Do not let anyone rob you of the joy of your experience. Exodus 12:24-26 says when you return home, continue to celebrate what God has done and when people ask the reason for your joy, be ready to give your testimony.

Remember (Luke 17:9-10) the servant is not thanked because he is only doing what he is supposed to do.

I am sure that is the way you feel – you did not do this for the thanks of people but there are many people that are thankful and grateful for your service. Rejoice in that you were called to serve the Master.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Impaction!!
Matthew 28:19-20
By Trish Pierson

The most influential people in my life???? There have been numerous people who have come in and out of my life throughout the years. People who have encouraged me, rebuked me, motivated me, and loved me. Each and every one of them has made an impact on me. They have been used by God to take me on the next step on my journey with Him. So I want to ask you, who has made an impact on your life? Your parents, your spouse, friends, coworkers? As you reflect on these people, can you see their faces? How has God used them to impact you? Have they been the salt and the light to help you walk down the path you are currently traveling? Who do you want to make an impact on this week and why? As you travel this week, ask God to place that one person, that one face, in your path. Someone you can pour yourself into this week, to show God's love, grace, and truth with. Someone you can continue to pray for when you return home. Someone who needs to be impacted by you. The Great Commission in Matthew 28 tells us that we are to make disciples as we go. Are you going??? Are you impacting? Do you see their faces?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Do you smell like Jesus?

2 Cor. 2:14-16

By Gary Williams

I had to smile when I read this (v. 15) – that our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God - because most of the time I cannot smell anything. I had throat surgery and am now a neck breather. This can be a good thing if the smell is really bad. I pray that my life will always “smell” good to God because it is Christ-like.

God instructed Moses to use a unique blend of fragrant spices on the altar of incense in the tabernacle. When God’s people smelled this fragrance, they knew it was associated with the Lord Himself. We are the fragrance of Christ as our lives spread His message – to some life – to some death. This week you should have the aroma of Jesus so people will feel the very presence of God.

Keep in mind, our ministry is God-powered. We need to focus on what God can do through us, not on what we can do ourselves. You can trust the Lord’s leadership when impressions are born out of submissive prayer and Bible study. If you want to smell good to God, begin with spiritual renewal for service and confess the sins within your life. As you serve you will find yourself under a spotlight. You will be subjected to new pressures and test of your faith.

- Acts 20:24 – My life is worth nothing (no purpose) unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus – the work of telling others about Jesus.
- Acts 12:1 – Let us lay aside every weight (baggage in our minds) that might so easily slow us down and let us eagerly do the work that is set before us.

I pray that you will be as flexible as a rubber band and smell as sweet as a rose.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Trust God's Love, Look for His Goodness

by Linda Williams

Psalms 23; John 3:16

When I was a little girl, we lived on a farm. The farm had a lot of big hills with cow paths around the sides and in between hills. My daddy would take me with him to check on the cows. One of his favorite places was the valley at the bottom of the hills. It was cool and refreshing even on the hottest summer days. He would sit down on a rock and I would sit down at his feet. He would tell me stories about the history of the farm and tell me to look at the fertile land in the valley and how well the clover grew there. I felt so safe and secure even though we were down in the bottom. I never worried about coyotes, snakes and ticks because daddy was down there with me.

This is where I first learned the love of a father. Our heavenly Father loves us this way. He walks with us, shows us the good paths, points out the fertile soil and shares His word with us. All we have to do is listen and follow.

Your dad may not have been like mine but rest assured your heavenly Father is the same as mine.

He loved you so much He gave his son as a sacrifice for your sins. He walks with you and talks to you; He leads you through the hard times and shows you goodness and mercy.

Take some time to reflect on the goodness of the Father's love toward you. How has He shown Himself to you in these days?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

I Need You to Go into the Dryer

2 Cor. 4:17-18

By Linda Williams

In the past year my husband was hospitalized for three weeks with a very serious illness. During those three weeks I came home one time to rest, re-pack and go back. At some point, while I was grabbing things out of the washer and tossing them in the dryer, I saw my new sweater go into the dryer – the one that said “must dry flat”. I must have really been stressed because I said to the sweater, “Sorry but you must go in the dryer, because I need you.” As I said those words, I began to ponder how many times we feel like we are in the dryer of life -- when actually God is just using us.

This week you have been chosen, called by God to serve Him in volunteer mission work. There may be times when you feel like you are in the dryer and surely will never be the same again. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus told Peter “If you are a follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow me.”

It may have been hard for you to give up this week for this important work. You may have had some type of difficulty in actually getting here. This week may be hard for you. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done. You will experience God’s peace which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your heart and mind.

Philippians 4:6-7; Galatians 6:9-10

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