

Nudges of the Spirit



Meditations for May 12th to May 18th

Nudges of the Spirit is currently a ministry of Deacon Carolyn Quinnell, Sandy Freiburger and Denise Bersos.
This week's selections have been written by Carolyn.

Sunday, May 12th Psalm 1 / Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 / 1 John 5:9-13 / John 17:6-19 *(written by Carolyn)*

John 17:12 (Jesus said) *While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

Happy Mother's Day! I pray you have, or have had, a positive Mother role-model in your life. I have no idea if Jesus' mother, Mary, heard her son pray this prayer, but if she did, can you imagine the mix of emotions that would have been flowing through her? Her baby, the one that needed her guidance and protection in his early years was fast approaching the cross. She must have felt an overwhelming grief, yet also comfort in the knowledge that her son was praying for her. We like to see our children "do well". Mary's son "did well". Judas would have had a mother. We know nothing about her. I wonder: Would she have begged Jesus to forgive him? It seems like a mother-thing to do.

Lord, thank you for good mother-figures everywhere. Amen.

Monday, May 13th Psalm 89:1-18 / Joshua 1:1-9 / Ephesians 3:1-13 / Matthew 8:5-17 *(written by Carolyn)*

Psalm 89:9 *You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them.*

My husband and I were out on a lake in our kayaks one time when the wind started blowing to the point where the flags a homeowner had in his backyard were standing straight out – and not from starch! There were whitecaps all around and the waves lapped over the sides of our boats. Needless to say, it was rough going into the wind, which was the direction we had to go in order to get back to where our vehicle was. No, Jesus did not come and calm the winds and waves of the lake, but He did see us safely home. Today we can chuckle about our experience; but we're careful to check the weather report before taking the kayaks out! Have you ever felt like your future was uncertain? Have you ever felt like things were out of control? I pray you remember to ask Jesus into those times in your life. He's waiting to hear from you.

Thank you, Jesus, for leading us in good times and bad. Amen.

Tuesday, May 14th Psalm 97, 99 / 1 Samuel 16:1-13a / Ephesians 3:14-21 / Matthew 8:18-27 *(written by Carolyn)*

Ephesians 3:16 (Paul wrote) *"I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit..."*

On these pages, we have spoken several times about the Lord being with us in good times and bad. Here Paul talks about being strengthened in our inner being. That can take on the form of physical, emotional or spiritual – or a combination of each. The Spirit knows what we need, far better than we do ourselves. For instance, I may think I need an extra dose of patience, but what I really need is a nap because I'm physically tired. All of these words in this section from Ephesians give me the impression of Paul praying a blessing over those he is writing to. Paul is pouring out love to his readers. What a gift that is for them. What a gift it would be to those around us if we did the same.

Lord, thank you for blessing me through Paul's words. Amen.

Wednesday, May 15th Psalm 101, 109:1-4(5-19)20-30 / Isaiah 4:2-6 / Ephesians 4:1-16 / Matthew 8:28-34 *(written by Carolyn)*

Ephesians 4:11 *The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers...*

In today's church settings, I would add other roles to Paul's list: some would be ushers, some greeters, some kitchen help, some building and grounds people... so that all people would feel included into the body of Christ. As a deacon, every few years I am required to take updated training on safeguarding God's people. Today's lesson was on inclusion of all, regardless of race, gender, age, etc. The course emphasized that we should all be aware of who may be present, but unheard from for various reasons. As a female, I too have had experiences of being ignored, talked over or interrupted. While it can be a common experience, that doesn't make it right. We all have something to contribute, and our Lord is always ready to accept our offering. May humanity catch up, soon.

Open my lips, oh Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Amen.

Thursday, May 16th Psalm 105:1-22 / Zechariah 4:1-14 / Ephesians 4:17-32 / Matthew 9:1-8 *(written by Carolyn)*

Ephesians 4:26-27 (Paul wrote) *"Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil."*

So, how do you sleep when you go to bed angry? I don't know about you, but it takes me a long time to finally get the rest my body needs, and invariably morning comes all too quickly. Therefore, I'm not at my best the next day because I haven't had a good night's sleep. Paul's advice here is both practical and worthy of refrigerator magnet status. It is not that anger in itself is bad; it's after all a natural human emotion and to pretend it is not there is a form of lying. But what do we do with the anger? Do we let it fester? Or do we get to the root of the matter and resolve our issue? There's a saying that reminds me that I cannot change someone else, I can only change myself – and only with God's help!

Lord, help me be the person you would have me be. Amen.

Friday, May 17th Psalm 102 / Jeremiah 31:27-34 / Ephesians 5:1-20 / Matthew 9:9-17 *(written by Carolyn)*

Ephesians 5:1-2 *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Some days it is hard to live in love. My husband and I left the house this morning with three errands to accomplish and a few hours later returned home with none of them done for one reason or another. Frustration. I'm absolutely certain Jesus must have experienced a similar emotion when dealing with temple authorities and even His own disciples. But that doesn't mean He quit loving us; neither are we to claim an excuse of having a bad day as a reason to not show grace and mercy to others. In fact, when we give into the temptation of "behaving badly", the next time a similar situation occurs we will bow to temptation again – and then again – and then again. Before we know it, we will have turned away from the Lord. So, with me, take a deep breath and imitate Christ.

Lord, show me your ways. Amen.

Saturday, May 18th Psalm 107:33-43, 108:1-6(7-13) / Ezekiel 36:22-27 / Ephesians 6:10-24 / Matthew 9:18-26 *(written by Carolyn)*

Ephesians 6:14-15 (Paul wrote) *"Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace."*

I understand about the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness; but putting on shoes to proclaim the gospel of peace? What do shoes have to do with peace? Well, shoes are important and wearing the right kind of well-fitting shoes can mean the difference between walking safely and twisting an ankle. For instance, flip flops are not a particularly good choice for long hikes over rough ground – good fitting sneakers or hiking boots are much

better. So, Paul's comment about shoes leads me to think I should wear something that I can put on and not be distracted by how they fit or if they're appropriate. He's telling me to be prepared for the terrain ahead, for surely the evil one would love to distract me from living as the Lord would want me to. How about you? What are your thoughts?

Lord, guide my steps as I try to follow you. Amen.