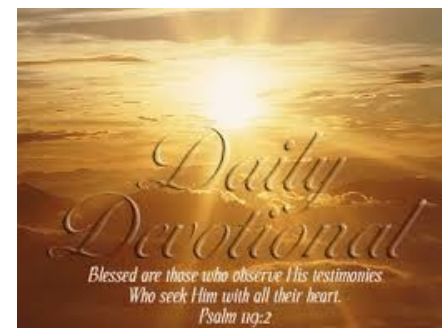


*Time  
for  
Devotion*



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## Time for Devotion

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*“Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up.”*  
*Psalm 5:1-3*

Whether it is in the morning, at noon or at night, many Christians find a time during the day for a devotional study of some kind. It may take the form of scripture reading and prayer. We may sing a song along with our reading and prayer. There are a multitude of devotional studies available in booklet form or by way of email. Devotional material is usually very brief and attempts to help us focus our hearts and minds upon some Godly principle. This is not a time for in depth study, but a

short time of devotion to remind us of the God we serve and how we can be a better servant for him.

Several years ago I received an email from Steven & Emily Lemley asking me to write a couple of devotional articles for the publication **Power for Today**. I was very honored by the request and was happy to write. Since then I have written two or three articles each year for the publication.

Also about that same time I began to write some devotional articles called **Vitamin E (ncouragement)** that are sent out via email. These are written on a somewhat irregular time frame, usually depending on whether I am traveling or at home or have other things going on.

Times of devotion are encourag-

'Da End is Near  
Turn Yo Sef 'Roun Now  
Afore It Be Too Late!

As a car sped past them, the driver leaned out his window and yelled, 'You religious nuts!' From the curve they heard screeching tires, and a big splash...

Boudreaux turns to Thibodaux and asks, 'Do ya tink maybe da sign should jussay.....'Bridge Out?'

In the immortal words of the Warden from the movie **Cool Hand Luke**, “What we have here is a failure to communicate.” I don’t know what kind of ‘nut’ was behind the wheel of the car in this story, but I sure hope he was one of the religious variety. It appears he met his Maker with a big splash!

This story reminds us that true religion does have some very worthwhile merits. Christians who genuinely love their neighbors as they love themselves are a blessing to their community and to the nation. It seems certain that our nation could use a good dose of Christian principles right now. What the Bible teaches about morality, discipline and moderation produces not just better Christians, but it generates better citizens, better neighbors and better leaders. It is very possible that we need to “turn ourselves around” to avoid a disaster that lurks just ahead. The place to begin the turnaround is with ME! May God help us to practice what we preach and to genuinely love our neighbors.

*“So he answered and said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.’”* Luke 10:27-28

**Vitamin E(ncouragement) 2011**



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One rich man, who had a bumper crop, believed that he was thinking properly about the future but he failed to understand that laying up treasures for oneself is not an adequate insurance policy for the future (Luke 12:13-21). Another rich man discovered too late that ignoring your fellowman can have eternal consequences for the future (Luke 16:19-31). He petitioned Father Abraham to send someone back to warn his five brothers to make better plans for their futures.

When we think about the amount of time, energy and resources we spend building bigger barns, faring sumptuously every day and entertaining ourselves, we might want to refocus some of our resources on a better future that will not be filled with regrets.

*“But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’”  
Luke 16:31*

*Vitamin E(ncouragement) 2010*

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## Those Religious Nuts

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*“...in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he comes, in that Day, to be glorified in his saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.” 2Thessalonians 1:8-10*

I’ve seen this story several times in different places and it turned up again in an email I received a week or so back. If you haven’t seen it, I think you will enjoy it. If you are like me, you may have seen it at some time and have already forgotten the punch line! Here’s the story:

Reverend Boudreaux was the part-time pastor of the local Cajun Baptist Church and Pastor Thibodaux was the minister of the Covenant Church across the road. They were both standing by the road, pounding a sign into the ground that read:

ing and at times even calming for us. It is good to set aside some time each day for a period of meditation and devotion, whatever form it may take. We find many men in the Bible like David and Daniel who made time in their lives for daily devotion. Daniel prayed three times a day with his face toward Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10). We are told that this was his custom. The Psalmist affirms, “As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice” (Psa. 55:16-17).

In this issue of **BC** I am reprinting some of the devotional articles that I have written in recent years. If you are not in the habit of a daily devotion, I hope that you can use these articles to encourage you to make a time each day for devotional reading and prayer.

...lsg

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### C. S. Lewis Quotes

Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither.

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It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.

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If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

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I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

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There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way.'

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## Rich Toward God

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Read Luke 12:16-21

BIBLE THOUGHT: "...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matthew 7:20 NKJV)

ONE MODERN PROVERB states that no deceased man will be taking a U-haul trailer with him to the cemetery. I saw a cartoon once depicting a man completely bent over with his total focus on the ground. He was picking up coins and putting them in a bag he was carrying. He was so engaged with his coins that he didn't see what was just ahead of him---the cemetery!

Jesus told a parable about a man that we often call the "rich fool." This man was not condemned for being rich, nor was he condemned for being prudent. He was condemned for his failure to acknowledge God's providential care and his own dependence on God. He thought his possessions were his treasure and forgot that God is the true source of power and wealth.

There is a principle taught in God's word that seems to contradict every human inclination of self-preservation: The only things we really keep are the things that we give away. We can hoard every dime we earn and bury it in our yard, but we will never take it with us when we die. The only dimes and nickels and dollars that make the journey with us into the next world are the ones we give away!

Sing: "Take My Life, and Let It Be"

Dear Lord, You have been so rich toward us and have given so freely all things that pertain to life and godliness. Teach us to be rich in giving of our time, talent and wealth. Help us to be generous stewards of all the blessings you have given to us. In Jesus name. Amen.

*Power for Today 2008*

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## No. 1 High School Regret

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*"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'" Luke 12:20*

Do you remember your high school days? Some of us may look back with fond memories and others may look back with discouraging regrets. Here's what one survey reports about the most common high school regrets:

When it comes to high school, our greatest regrets are not thinking more about the future and not spending more time studying. That's the word from a survey conducted by Classmates.com that found that 63 percent of U.S. adults said if they could do over their high school years, they would think ahead about the future and college, while 61 percent said they would study harder and get better grades.

When adults look back on their high school years, the majority said they had one of two priorities: socializing or studying. Fully 31 percent admitted their top priority in high school was their social life and spending time with friends, although studying to get good grades was a close second with 28 percent. Looking back, many think their studies would have improved under the guidance of an inspiring teacher or mentor. According to the survey, 53 percent of adults say they wish they had found a teacher or mentor who believed in them and inspired them.

Although the leading regret Americans have about their high school years is not having focused more on schoolwork and the future, there are still many others who feel they took their school years too seriously. Roughly half say that if they could do over their high school experience, they would relax and not sweat the small stuff.

If we could take a survey of those who recently died, I wonder if we would obtain a similar result. Would the number one regret about a life just finished be that we didn't spend more time thinking about the future and studying God's word? The New Testament does give us a glimpse of one man about to die and another who had recently died.

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## Tennessee Ten Commandments

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Some people in Tennessee have trouble with all those "shalls" and "shall nots" in the Ten Commandments. Folks just aren't used to talking in those terms. So, some folks in middle Tennessee got together and translated the "King James" into " Jackson County " language.... no joke, read on...

The Hillbilly's Ten Commandments (posted on the wall at Cross Trails Church in Gainesboro , TN. )

- (1) Just one God
  - (2) Honor yer Ma & Pa
  - (3) No tellin' tales or gossipin'
  - (4) Git yourself to Sunday meetin'
  - (5) Put nothin' before God
  - (6) No foolin' around with another fellow's gal
  - (7) No killin'
  - (8) Watch yer mouth
  - (9) Don't take what ain't yers
  - (10) Don't be hankerin' for yer buddy's stuff
- Original Author unknown.

Now that's kinda plain an' simple, don't ya think?  
Y'all have a good day.

*Vitamin E(ncouragement) 2009*

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## Life Prep 101

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Read Genesis 41:28-44

BIBLE THOUGHT: “And Pharaoh said to his servants, ‘Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?’” (Genesis 41:38 NKJV).

MOST HIGH SCHOOLS drill into students today the idea that they will be failures in life unless they go to college. One statement that college prep coaches make is: “The realities of the world economy make educational success a must.” It is important to obtain a good education for vocational success, but it is not true that those who do not attend college will be failures.

The young man Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and sold into Egyptian slavery. He faced many struggles, trials and temptations, but through all of them he continued to trust in God. The difficulties we face in life both build character and also reveal character. When Pharaoh wanted a man to make preparations for a great famine, he decided there was no one better than Joseph because he recognized that Joseph was a man who had the Spirit of God.

There have been other men who were chosen for leadership because they possessed the Spirit of God. God told Moses to take Joshua because he was a man “in whom is the Spirit” (Numbers 27:18). The seven men chosen by the Apostles to assist the widows in Jerusalem were men who were “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3).

It is good to seek an education to prepare for your vocation in life, but remember that it is God who really prepares you for life.

Sing: “Take Time To Be Holy”

Dear Lord, We know that there are many pressures upon us to obtain a good education and be successful, and by your grace we will do that. Help us to understand that our lives do not consist of just jobs, possessions and money. Help us, Lord, to take time to be holy because we know that it is you that prepares us for eternity. In Jesus name. Amen.

*Power for Today 2009*

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## Love Letter From God

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Read Nehemiah 8:1-9

BIBLE THOUGHT: “And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up” (Nehemiah 8:5 NKJV).

I READ A STORY recently about a woman character in a television series who was reading a book entitled *Love Letters of Great Men*. There were millions of women who wanted to get their hands on the book. Of course, what could be more romantic than an entire book of love letters, written by men! Unfortunately, the book was not real!

In the book of Nehemiah we read about Ezra the scribe assembling all the people of Israel together to read from the Book of the Law. We are told that he read from morning to midday and the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. The people also showed great respect by standing up when the book was opened.

Have you ever waited with great anticipation to receive a letter from someone you loved? How did you treat the letter when it arrived? Did you cast it aside and say that you would read it when you had the time? Most likely you tackled the mailman and tore open the letter before you went back into the house.

The Bible is God’s love letter to all of his people. What a wonderful story unfolds in its pages. It tells of God’s wonderful love for you, my friend. Open God’s word and let it fill you with faith and hope.

Sing: “Sing Them Over To Me Again”

Dear Lord, Thank you for your letter of love that has been written in the blood of your son, Jesus Christ. May our hearts overflow with your love and may it touch all of those we meet. In Jesus name. Amen.

***Power for Today 2010***

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## A Man and His Word

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Read Matthew 6:33-37

BIBLE THOUGHT: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14 NKJV).

THE STORY IS TOLD of an old Southerner who walked into a banker’s office one day. The Southerner was a typical gentleman of the old school. “What can I do for you?” asked the banker. “Well,” replied the Southerner, “about thirty-five years ago I loaned a man down south some money---not a very big sum. I told him that whenever I should need it I would let him know, and he could pay me the money. I need some money now, so I shall let him know, and I should like to have you transact the business for me.”

“My good friend,” replied the banker, “you have no claim on that money. The statute of limitations has run out against that loan years ago.” “Sir,” replied the Southerner, “the man to whom I loaned that money is a gentleman. The statute of limitations never runs out against a gentleman.” So the banker sent for the money. And within a reasonable time thereafter the money came. There was a gentleman at the other end of the transaction also.

There is an old English proverb that states, “A man’s word is his bond.” This simply means that a gentleman doesn’t tell you one thing today and then change his mind tomorrow. To the best of his ability a gentleman keeps his word.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to live in a world where everyone kept his word? As Christians we are encouraged to create just such a world. John writes, “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). In essence John is saying that our words and our actions should produce an equal sum.

Sing: “The Greatest Commands”

Dear Lord, help us to love one another, in word and in deed, just as you have loved us. In Jesus name. Amen.

***Power for Today 2011***