



Moving Forward

5 Day Devotional
by Diana Abercrombie

Day 1

We Are Not Condemned

READ: John 8:2-11

Early one Morning Jesus had gone to the temple. Many people came to Him and He sat down to teach them (John 8:2).

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Him who had been caught in the act of adultery. They placed her in the center of the court (John 8:3). This was very public and very humiliating. They turned to Jesus and said “Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women, what then do You say?” (John 8:4-5). There was nowhere to run. She was completely exposed and by law should have been put to death.

I love that the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus “what then do You say?” I love that because only what He says matters anyway! It doesn’t matter that the law, the scribes and the Pharisees said she should be stoned. Only what Jesus says about us matters. It’s the same thing when Satan accuses us. It doesn’t matter what sin Satan accuses us of; even if we are guilty of that sin. What Jesus speaks about us and to us is what we need to hold on to.

Jesus knew that they were trying to trap Him into saying something they could use against Him. Initially He did not respond. He stooped down and began to write in the sand. He took a minute before He said anything. We should do the same. We should take a minute to “stoop down and write in the sand” before reacting to situations. Pray and ask God for guidance in how to respond to whatever is coming at us.

The scribes and Pharisees treated the woman with hate and disgust. Jesus had a totally different reaction. He didn’t show disgust, surprise or anger. Jesus doesn’t react to our sin the way others do. Our sin never catches him by surprise. Our sin doesn’t cause Him to react in disgust toward us. Jesus hates sin but He loves us.

When the scribes and Pharisees pressed Jesus for an answer, He straightened up and said “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” He DIDN’T say, “He who is without MUCH sin” or “he who is without BIG sin”. He said, “He who is without sin”. The accusers left! That is so powerful!

When all the accusers were gone, and she was alone with Jesus, He spoke to her heart. He told her He did not condemn her either and to go and sin no more. In other words, GET UP OUT OF THIS PIT AND DON’T DO IT AGAIN!

My prayer is that we remember there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). We are free from condemnation because of Christ’s blood on the cross; no matter what Satan tries to accuse us of!!

Day 2

Letting God's Peace Rule

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

Colossians 3:15

We are told in Colossians 3:15 to *“let the peace of God rule in our hearts”*. What does that mean exactly? How do we *“let the peace of God rule in our hearts”*? When our lives are so busy and there is so much chaos and confusion what does it look like to let God's peace rule?

There is always a battle for our peace. When we have no peace in our lives we have a restless spirit and a restless mind. Being restless makes it very difficult to stay focused on God and our relationship with Him. It is important to realize that we are either allowing God's peace to rule in our hearts or we are allowing confusion and frustration to rule in our hearts. Once we understand that we are allowing one or the other, we can make the choice to let God's peace rule. In so doing, we are turning our focus from what is stealing our peace back to the only power that can give us true and lasting peace. We think we have no choice. We do. The Bible says that we are to *“let the peace of God rule”*. We have a choice. We can go to God's Word to help us change our focus. We can turn to Him in prayer and allow Him to calm us. We must always turn to Him.

The truth is, everyday life produces *“crazy”* sometimes. We have work, children, spouses and a host of other things going on at any given moment that are potential peace snatchers. When everything around us is chaotic and crazy, God's peace makes our spirit calm in the midst of it. That is why Satan fights so hard to steal our peace. He doesn't want us to stay calm and focused on Christ. He wants us rattled and frustrated so we will make wrong choices and turn to anything and everything but God.

God's peace transcends all understanding and guards our hearts and minds. We must seek peace and pursue it (1 Peter 3:10-11). As members of one body in Christ, we are called to His peace and responsible for letting it rule in our lives. We need to understand that we are responsible for letting God's peace rule in our lives and let that drive us to actively pursue peace in our lives through Christ.

The last part of Colossians 3:15 says *“be thankful”*. Be grateful for the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for us. Be grateful that all mighty God is in control regardless of what our circumstances look like. Be grateful that we can have God's peace in the midst of our chaos. Be grateful that God is who He is and never leaves or forsakes us. A grateful heart will always point us back to God's goodness.

Day 3

Keep Moving Forward

READ: Daniel 1:8-19

Daniel had no control over the circumstances he found himself in. He was taken as a young man to serve a new King who had besieged Judah. He, along with other choice youth from Israel, was chosen by the king to serve in this foreign army and was forced to learn their literature and language. The king controlled what food he ate, how much food he ate and when he ate it. Even his name was changed. His identity as an Israelite was being stripped from him. His world was basically turned upside down.

What's interesting about Daniel is that he made choices IN his circumstances. The Bible says that God allowed Judah to be taken over (Daniel 1:2). Daniel chose to trust God IN his circumstances. He didn't fixate on what was happening around him or to him personally. He knew who he was and more importantly, he knew who his God was.

Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself with the King's food or with the wine which he drank (Daniel 1:8) The Bible says "Daniel made up his mind". That means he had a choice. He could have allowed himself to stay in "defeat" as this situation was much bigger than he. But, he made a choice not to defile himself. For him, the choice was always to do what God would have him do not what others wanted him to do.

Once he made the choice not to defile himself with the King's food and wine, he took action. He sought permission from the overseer to eat vegetables and drink water instead of the food the King had commanded them to eat. In making the decision to seek permission to go against what the king had ordered, he knew it could bring about his death as well as the overseer's death. What faith Daniel had!

AFTER he made the decision and then acted on that decision, God gave him favor in the sight of the overseer. The overseer wanted to grant Daniel's request but was afraid. Daniel did not give up. He knew what was right and he pursued it. He made a second request to allow him to be fed vegetables and water for 10 days and then let the overseer determine for himself if he and his friends were in better condition than the others. I love the fact that he didn't give up.

I pray that in our lives, when we find ourselves in situations beyond our control, that we make up our minds to trust God. That we make the decision to do what is right and not get swallowed up by whatever circumstances are surrounding us. I pray that we take action and keep moving forward toward God and never give up!!!!

Day 4

Behold I Do a New Thing

“Do not call to mind the former things or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do a new thing. Now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

Isaiah 43:18-19

So often in our lives we hold on to things of the past. We remember every harsh word spoken to us. We call to mind every unkind act that has been orchestrated against us. We hold on to those things until they consume our every thought.

God tells us in Isaiah 43:18-19 not to call to mind former things or ponder the things of the past. He is telling us we can make a different choice. There is a different mindset we can choose. We can choose to cast out those negative thoughts and begin taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Can you imagine taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ? Every thought!!

Satan would have us hold on to every “bad” thing that has ever happened to us. He wants us to think negatively in our marriages, in our jobs, in our churches. His goal is to keep us from focusing on Jesus. The good news is, there is another way. We are told in Philippians 4:8 to think things that are true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy. That kind of thinking always brings us back to God. It brings us back to God because HE is all those things. In thinking this way, rather than holding on to every negative thought that comes into our minds, we can “be aware” of the new thing God is doing in our lives, our marriages, our jobs. He says He will make a roadway in our wilderness. He says He will provide a river in our desert. Will we receive it? The choice is ours.

I pray that we would enter each day with a grateful heart. Ready to see Jesus IN whatever situation we are faced with. Knowing that He sees. He knows. He cares. Knowing and believing that He is doing a new thing in our lives.

Day 5

Possessing Your Land

“See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them.”

Deuteronomy 1:8

God gave the children of Israel clear instructions in Deuteronomy 1:8. He told them to “see”, “go in” and “possess”. Those instructions apply to us as well.

“See, I have placed the land before you”. God wanted the children of Israel to see the land and recognize that **HE HAD PLACED IT BEFORE THEM**. Our marriages, our relationships, our jobs, our churches, our friends, they are all “the land” God has placed before us. Whatever situation we are going through is “the land” God has placed before us. Do we understand that He has placed it before us and that He has a purpose for allowing us to be there? When we recognize that God has placed us where we are and that He is with us where we are, we are better able to see and receive the blessings God has for us IN that land.

“Go in and possess the land”. It’s very interesting that God told the children of Israel to “go in **AND POSSESS** the land” that He had placed before them. It wasn’t enough to just go in. They were told to go in and “possess the land”. Many times, we have made a move toward the land, we are in the land, but we do not possess the land God has given us. We are in our marriage but we are not glorifying God in it or actively participating in it. We are going to work every day but we are not looking for or representing God in our workplace. We profess Christ as our Savior but we refuse to grow in our relationship with Him. We are “in the land” but we do not “possess it”. We are breathing but are we living our lives to bring God glory?

So how do we possess the land God has placed before us? First, we “see” our lives as gifts from God to be lived for His glory and recognize that He is in control of every aspect of our lives. Second, we “go in”. We engage in our lives. We keep moving toward God. We don’t run. We don’t shrink back. Third, we “possess the land”. We purpose in our hearts to serve God wherever we are. We look for God IN our circumstances. We “fix our eyes” on Jesus not on what’s going on around us. We stay in His Word. We rejoice in the Lord always. We pray without ceasing. We have a grateful heart in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). We learn to be content in any situation (*Philippians 4:12*).

We “see”. We “go in”. We “possess”.