

# SEVENTH WEEK DEVOTIONAL

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## monday TROUBLE

*Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18*

Paul says our troubles are achieving something. The problem with troubles is that they feel to us like a senseless waste of our emotional energy, among other things. But eternity redefines trouble. It says that trouble has a way of bringing glory to God as we endure it. It's a confrontation. The invisible challenges the visible – and wins. When the eternal confronts the temporary, it's like the rising sun burning dew into atmospheric vapor. God says our troubles are not meaningless. Could that change the way you measure your experiences? Could it even change the way you pray? What if God wants you to seek not just an escape, but an enduring glory for the pain you've limped through? What if you never get to see what that trouble achieved in eternity? Can you trust God, who assures us he is making an eternal something of your temporary suffering?

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## tuesday NAKED

*Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10*

We are constantly aware of the body's imperfections and all the more as we inevitably age. The wrinkles. The love handles. The sore muscles that take longer to heal. It's a burden. Our shallow culture fixates on body image, youthfulness and appearance. But instead of fixating on what Paul calls a "tent," we should be mindful of the "building" we have as a "heavenly dwelling." He describes the life of a disciple like someone "groaning" to be covered securely and completely with lasting clothing. That eternal perspective produces a whole different kind of life. Are you "groaning" for more than the temporary clothing? Pray for God to cause your longing for eternity to deepen and your dissatisfaction with shallowness to intensify. That's what prepares us for the judgment seat (v.10) where we will answer for our viewpoint on life and the kind of life in the body it produced.

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## wednesday ANXIOUS

*Read Philippians 4:4-7*

There are some important concepts here: Peace. Gentleness. Rejoicing. Thanksgiving. Not being anxious. How is all of this possible? *The Lord is near.* The "man upstairs" perspective on God is just plain wrong. He is not far off. Ever. Think about what this means. The eternal, immortal God is near. Eternal life is already present as he is present. That should change the way we pray, right? How often do we pray with anxiousness and fear? When is the last time you prayed and petitioned God with rejoicing and thanksgiving? Make it today.

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## thursday FIGHT

*Read 1 Timothy 6:12-16*

The picture here is not one of conflict in war, but of exerting energy in athletics. Paul reminds Timothy that he was called to eternal life, but he must exert himself toward living it out. He made his confession in the presence of witnesses, and now he must follow it up with action. Paul's call to action is a command and refers to Jesus as an example of one who also made a confession and fulfilled it. Now that same Jesus is going to return! His imminent appearing should be our motivation to add energy to our words. Are you fighting?

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## friday HIDDEN

*Colossians 3:1-4*

Mystery is not always a bad thing. Our culture often tells us the only things that are real are the things that can be scientifically categorized and explained. But one of the beautiful truths about life in Christ is this: We can't fathom God or even all that we truly are in Christ. We can't shrink that down to what the human mind can understand. Because we died and were reborn, our lives are hidden with Christ until his return. He gets us more than we get ourselves. So we should continually seek him to discover who we are now. When we settle for setting our minds on earthly things, we're often attempting to shape our own lives on our own understanding, dumbing them down big time. But the point is, we are hidden. It is Christ who must reveal you *to you* as you live out your days. That's the essence of following him, taking our cues from the one in whom we live, move *and have our being* (Acts 17:28)! He told Simon, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." He can certainly reveal who you are and what you will be because of him.

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## saturday NEW

*Colossians 3:5-10*

"...Being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator" (v.10) That's what Paul says is happening to the new you. There is an old you and a new you. This is a pretty important thing to be thinking about. It's a good move to ask what the new you might do *and* what the old you would do – and act accordingly. The new you is the one that's already been "raised with Christ" (v.1) even though you're still here on earth. That means eternity has a say-so in your life because you are already eternal. It's this truth that empowers us to "put to death" the old, wayward sinful self. Are you actively dying to your old self? What of your old self might be lingering?